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Creativity in Primary Schools:
Exploring perspectives on creativity within a Scottish
primary school classroom

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The University of Edinburgh
2018

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me, is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Krystallia Kyritsi

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Abstract

This thesis explores children's and teachers' perspectives on creativity, and its implementation, within one primary school classroom in Scotland. The data collection phase of the research employed an ethnographic approach, involving four and a half months of fieldwork in the primary school classroom. Data were generated from participant observation/informal conversations with children and teachers and one round of semi-structured interviews with twenty-five children (aged eleven to twelve) and two teachers.

Creativity within primary education has been mainly studied through psychological research, which is mainly based on theories of developmental psychology. Such theories view creativity solely as an individual trait. Despite recognition of the importance of socio-cultural issues to the flourishing of children's creativity, the study of their collaborative creativity has been neglected – particularly in relation to socio-cultural power dynamics. This thesis specifically analyses the balance between individual and collective creativity in the primary classroom, examines how collaborative creativity can acknowledge childhood diversity, and poses questions about how we include children with differing and complex identities in creative processes.

Furthermore, this research has been carried out in Scotland, within the context of a fairly new curriculum, the Curriculum for Excellence. This curriculum has been viewed by some as a progressive, modern and motivating curriculum that enables children's autonomy, and by others as one that has been highly influenced by accountability and performativity regimes, which leave limited space for children's and teachers' autonomy. This thesis examines how the Curriculum for Excellence is interpreted in everyday practice and the extent to which it enables the cultivation of children's creativity. The thesis does so by shedding light on the practical interconnections between children's and teachers' agency, structural enablers/barriers, and cultural processes.

The findings of this study show that children perceive, perform and embody creativity not only as an individual trait, but also as a collaborative process. However, the findings also show that collaborative creativity entails many complexities and that cultural barriers to

creativity may emerge when power among people (children and teachers) operates in ways that create cultures of exclusion. The thesis concludes that the multiple identities of the Curriculum for Excellence, its multiple interpretations, and lack of coherence regarding what is expected of teachers, leads to a blurred landscape of implementation. The thesis argues that lack of a clear plan, strategy and framework for enabling creativity inhibits the founding principles of the Curriculum for Excellence from being achieved. The thesis also argues that environmental and structural barriers within the research setting inhibit the flourishing of children's creativity, but that the structural barriers can sometimes be overcome through the construction of enabling cultures. The thesis is able to define enabling cultures as cultures that value diversity, promote inclusion, and view space not as static, but as a dynamic process.

In so doing, the findings of this study emphasise the interconnected importance of: viewing creativity as an individual trait; perceiving creativity as a collaborative process; and thinking in spatial terms, for example, in ways that create the space for children to perceive, perform and embody creativity in their diverse, but equally valuable ways. This finding enables this study to argue that there is a need for future policies and curricula which promote and encourage greater flexibility in teaching and learning practices, in order to enhance children's and teachers' agency and thus allow them to collaboratively create the types of enabling environments, originally envisaged by the Curriculum for Excellence, that will allow children's creativity to flourish.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Explorations of creativity

Before coming to Edinburgh to start a PhD I was a teacher in a primary school in Greece. In 2011 I had just finished a four-year University degree in Primary Education; I was excited and highly motivated to start working with children, an activity that I had always found fascinating. However, due to the economic crisis in Greece, working in a state school was not a possibility for me, since I would have had to wait in a queue for several years in order to get a temporary position. Thus, I started working in a private school where the monthly fee for a single child was very high, causing many parents to expect their children to work extremely hard and produce high quality outputs. In a similar vein, the school's management paid particular attention to maintaining the school's profile in terms of excellence, innovation and efficiency. This rhetoric was translated into practice through the creation of a strict framework which teachers – and as a result, children as well – had to follow. During the first months I felt impressed by how organised and well-planned everything looked and I did not question much, since I was young and less experienced than my colleagues. However, I gradually realised that the culture that was being cultivated in that school (reinforced by all the different stakeholders) had created a rigid structure, involving surveillance by various actors. As a teacher I was expected to maintain discipline and to guide children through the daily schedule, which had been created by two principal teachers. I was teaching a third grade class of 28 children and at this school, there were about 190 children attending each grade. This meant that every single day, 190 children were taught exactly the same things, and were expected to complete the same assignments and homework. Since there was a large amount of content knowledge that had to be covered, there was very little time to be spent in collaborative work, but even when children were 'allowed' to work in groups they were given rigid guidelines as to what they should do, step by step. Therefore, it was not uncommon for every third grade class to work on the same project and for the children to produce almost identical drawings and artefacts, regardless of their own interests. As a teacher I was pressured to meet standards, but at the same time I felt bad about pressuring the children and demanding that they stay silent, memorise, reproduce high amounts of knowledge, and accumulate information. This environment did not match my expectations of how teachers' and

children's experiences in schools should unfold, and I remember feeling guilty about being authoritarian and suppressing children's curiosity and eagerness to experiment, explore and build trusting relationships. I felt that I was becoming part of a discourse in which no alternatives existed, and which was obsessed with 'improving' children's abilities at a frenetic pace within a highly competitive regime. This experience motivated me to start this PhD, inspired by my hope that it might be possible to create a different norm, fostering environments that value children's differences, encourage them to actively participate in their learning, avoid competition, question individualism, and build supportive relationships. For some reason, not entirely clear to me, the word that could define all these values to my mind's satisfaction was creativity.

To my great sadness, when I started exploring the literature I realised that the definition of creativity was very rigid and did not leave much space for people to interpret it in different ways. The dominant definitions of creativity derive from the field of psychology and resemble a tick-box system in which someone can be characterised as creative if and only if he/she can generate many ideas, which can be different types of ideas, but must also be unusual ideas (fluency/flexibility/originality) (Starko, 2010). This type of thinking derives from Guilford's theory (Kaufman, 2009) that creativity is part of human intelligence. Similarly, Gardner (1993, 1988) explained that creativity is a form of giftedness possessed by only a few individuals. It is difficult to see how children's experiences and definitions of creativity could fit into the discourse created by sections of the academic community such as the above.

It is fair to mention, however, that psychological research shows great variety. For example, within the prism of developmental psychology, Vygotsky (1998, 2004) emphasised the importance of social interactions for the development of children's creativity. However, he did not address the socio-cultural power dynamics that are part of collaboration and, moreover, he argued that children are considered capable of less mature creativity than adults, due to their relatively poor understanding of things (Vygotsky, 1998, Starko, 2010). Research in the field of creativity has promoted a democratic view of it, maintaining that everyone has the potential to be creative (see, for example, NACCCE, 1999). However, studies of this type have been criticised for treating creativity solely as an individual trait, over-emphasising the value of the final products and neglecting the possibility of viewing creativity as a process (Davis et al., 2011).

When psychological research has considered collaborative creativity, it has tended to pay attention only to the extent to which good-quality products, outputs or outcomes are produced by a group of people (Paulus, 1999). Such research has also acknowledged the importance of social interactions between children and adults (Chappell, 2007); argued that being in relationships with one another is an important aspect of learning; and suggested that sharing ideas helps children's creativity to flourish (Craft, 2003a, Craft, 2005). However, in so doing, it has not explored children's own perspectives on creativity, how power operates among people, how childhood differences influence creative processes, and how children's different identities impact on their experiences of creativity. My study, therefore, sought to move beyond psychological frameworks, since research that focused on the individual did not seem to provide enough space for children's perspectives to be heard, valued, taken seriously or paid attention to.

The academic field of childhood studies enabled me to take a broader view of childhood, going beyond dominant developmental perspectives (Qvortrup, 1994, Prout and James, 1997). The field of childhood studies emerged during the 1980s and 1990s and promoted a sociological agenda, but also put forward the need to adopt an interdisciplinary approach (Prout, 2005). Childhood was traditionally viewed 'as a stage; as a structured process of becoming; ..., as a tabula rasa; ..., as shaping the individual; growing up; preparation; inadequacy; inexperience; immaturity' (Jenks, 2005:9). However, recent approaches recognise childhood as a social phenomenon characterised by heterogeneity and complexity and call on us to move beyond oppositions of 'being' and 'becoming', 'structure' and 'agency', 'nature' and 'culture', and so on (Prout, 2005). The field of childhood studies is built around key principles, including some of the following:

- children are viewed as human beings, instead of as becomings (Qvortrup, 1994)
- childhood is viewed as a variable of social analysis and therefore is always connected to other variables, such as class, gender and ethnicity (James and Prout, 1997)
- childhood is heterogeneous and not a universal phenomenon (James and Prout, 1997)
- childhood is viewed as a social category and the child as an ontology in its own right (Jenks, 2005). For example, as Gallagher (2009a:66) mentions, in research

with children, the ontology refers to ‘what is a child’, and the epistemology to ‘what can we know about children and childhood’ and ‘how can we acquire this knowledge’.

This thesis has sought to utilise these principles when researching children’s perspectives on and experiences of creativity. By locating my study within the field of childhood studies I have sought to move beyond experimental and psychological approaches to the study of creativity that have failed to focus on or give weight to children’s own meanings. The next section elaborates on the scope of this study.

1.2 The scope of this study

Research on creativity has been mainly guided by the academic field of developmental psychology and has focused considerably on the effort to define creativity. These attempts have led to a narrowing down of the understandings and meanings of creativity, producing rigid definitions that have erased all the different possibilities and imaginings of how creativity can be perceived and experienced. This thesis does not aim to give a single definition of creativity or to provide any sort of generalisations on how creativity is experienced by children. Instead, this study seeks to explore children’s diverse perspectives and to understand different ways in which creativity can be performed and embodied, as well as to shed light on the types of barriers, cultural or structural, that may emerge when trying to implement creativity.

The focus of this study has also been developed by identifying some particular gaps in the literature. These gaps include: how creativity is promoted and implemented in school environments; how we pay attention to the learners’ diversity; and how we explore creativity whilst promoting children’s voices (Davies et al., 2013). Additionally, although some research acknowledges that social interaction is important for fostering creativity (Chappell, 2007, Chappell and Craft, 2011, Craft et al., 2012, Craft et al., 2014, Davis et al., 2011, Davis, 2013), there is a gap in the field of childhood creativity in relation to the influence of socio-cultural power dynamics on how children perceive, perform and embody collaborative creativity. Finally, on coming to Scotland, I became aware of the

lack of research in relation to how children's creativity is experienced within the Curriculum for Excellence.

The present study seeks to address the above-mentioned gaps by exploring the following research questions:

- 1) What are children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom?
- 2) How is children's creativity experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom?
- 3) What are the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity?
- 4) How is the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice, implemented in practice?
- 5a) What cultural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?
- 5b) What structural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?

These questions, in essence, are about how creativity is interpreted. It has been argued that ethnography is an important method for studying such interpretive questions (James and Prout, 1997). Therefore, this thesis explored the above questions by way of an ethnographic approach that involved four and a half months of fieldwork in one Scottish primary school classroom. Data were generated from participant observation/informal conversations with children and teachers and one round of semi-structured interviews with twenty-five children (aged eleven to twelve) and two teachers.

Before embarking on the review of the literature I think it is important to define some key terms and acronyms that are used in this study, as well as to provide an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.3 Definition of terms and acronyms

Before outlining the structure of this thesis, I will clarify some of the key terms and acronyms used in it.

- CfE is often used to refer to the 'Curriculum for Excellence', a curriculum for children aged 3-18 that was launched in 2004 in Scotland.

- P7 refers to Primary 7, the seventh and final year of children's attendance at a primary school in Scotland.
- 'Children' is used to describe the main participants in this research, which was conducted with children aged 11-12. The CRC and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child define 'child' as person below the age of 18. The use of 'children and young people' is more common in the UK, as presented in Tisdall and Punch (2012), but the present research only uses the term 'children', since the research participants were children, according to the Scottish Government's definition of a 'child' (see Scottish Government, 2014).
- 'Parent' refers to the children's mother, and/or father, and/or caregivers who have responsibility for the children.
- 'Culture' relates to ideas, dispositions, values, beliefs, discourses and language (Priestley, 2014) and, in this thesis, the word is used in line with Clifford's (1986:2) definition, which sees culture as 'composed of seriously contested codes and representations', and as viewing the poetic and the political as interconnected. Furthermore, as Clifford (1986:2) argues, culture reaches out 'to contexts of power, resistance, institutional constraint, and innovation'. However, it has also been highlighted that culture cannot always be interpreted, as it is 'contested, temporal and emergent', but, on such occasions, researchers are encouraged to use representation and explanation to contextualise their data (Clifford, 1986:19).
- 'Structure' is used to describe coercive power structures.
- In this study, inclusion is not viewed merely as the practice of including everyone. Instead, inclusion is viewed as a process that 'involves regular schools and classrooms genuinely adapting and changing to meet the needs of all children' (Loreman et al., 2005:2) and requires transformation to enable everyone's inclusion in all aspects of schooling (Ainscow, 1999).
- 'Co-participation' has been defined as;

'a social situation in which individuals are acting creatively by themselves but drawing upon the social context for ideas to include or to reject and at the same time developing a feeling of belonging to the whole group and social context' (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009:46).

Within a co-participative situation, learners use and are influenced by the social context and such influences are reflected in their individual work (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009). Social interactions also take place, not only between teachers and learners, but also between learners themselves, enabling them to share their experiences and explore their individual work in more depth (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009).

- ‘Collaboration’ has been defined as the arrangement whereby ‘a group work together in a creative activity and sometimes act co-participatively using the social context as a resource’ (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009:46). Collaborative work usually involves two people or a small group who work together on a project or task, in order to ‘produce something or to solve a problem’ (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009:48).
- ‘Collective participation’ is an experience that ‘involves the whole class acting together to construct something or learners contributing to a class situation involving the attention and engagement of the whole class’ (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009:46).
- Creative teaching VS teaching for creativity:
Creative teaching has been promoted as beneficial to children’s learning by the Curriculum for Excellence and by other Scottish policy documents. For example, CfE mentions that;

‘The more varied and imaginative opportunities given to children to use newly acquired skills, the more likely will be the increased motivation and sense of self-confidence that are essential to the real and lasting learning’ (Scottish Executive, 2007:12).

Additionally, other Scottish policy documents highlight the importance of creative teaching for the cultivation of creativity; for example, the Creativity Across Learning 3-18 (2013) document mentions that the teacher’s role is very important to the delivery of exciting lessons that foster children’s creativity. In general, creative teaching involves teachers who use ‘imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective’ (NACCCE, 1999:102). It also involves the process of paying attention to children’s interests and thus enhancing pupils’ motivation to learn (Jeffrey, 2008, NACCCE, 1999, Azzam, 2009).

However, it has been argued that creative teaching may not necessarily foster children's creativity, in contrast with teaching for creativity, which is closely linked to helping children's creativity flourish (NACCCE, 1999, Starko, 2010). Teaching for creativity involves 'forms of teaching that are intended to develop young people's own creative thinking or behaviour' (NACCCE, 1999:103), as seen in qualities such as 'autonomy, authenticity, openness, respect and fulfilment' (NACCCE, 1999:107). It has been contended that basic tasks for promoting teaching for creativity in a primary school classroom incorporate encouragement of children's efforts, to boost their motivation and self-confidence (NACCCE, 1999); the provision of opportunities for discussion; and the posing of questions that enable children to be active learners within a co-participatory framework (Craft, 2005).

1.4 Structure of the thesis

In this introductory chapter, I have outlined the development of my interest in the field of creativity and primary education and briefly introduced the theoretical framework on which this study is based. Additionally, I have presented and explained the main aims of this thesis, the research questions explored by the study, and the key terminology drawn from the literature. This thesis is organised in eight chapters organised as follows.

Chapter 2 explores relevant literature within the field, contextualises the present study and situates it in theoretical debates. First, I present the most influential theories of creativity in a 'nutshell' and from different disciplines, including philosophical, psychoanalytic, psychological, cognitive, developmental, anthropological, and system theories. I then identify common characteristics among the above theories, shed light on the notions of 'agency' and 'performativity', and explore the role of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence in relation to its aim of enabling children's creativity to flourish. Then, I turn the focus onto childhood, power, progressive/critical/productive pedagogies and intersectionality, in order to shed light on the cultural context of childhood and so to pose questions concerning creativity, collaboration and schooling. Overall, this chapter presents key theoretical debates, and highlights key gaps in the literature in relation to children's choices, school cultures, peer group perspectives, creative processes/performances and

classroom structures, issues that are explored further in the discussion chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approach adopted in this study. I begin by outlining the epistemological and ontological stance that was adopted by and influenced this research. Then, I explain why ethnography is the most effective approach for answering the research questions of this study and I discuss issues surrounding children's participation in research. Finally, I present the practicalities of the research as encountered during the fieldwork and I explain the use of participant observation and interviews as the preferred research methods used for generating data.

Chapter 4 continues the discussion of methods so as to include issues of ethics, access, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. I also critically explore the notions of validity and reliability and, as an alternative to these, I suggest the use of reflexivity as an interpretive tool. Finally, I provide an account of the processes of writing fieldnotes, analysing the data and developing the dissemination procedure.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present and discuss the findings of the present research. Chapter 5 explores children's and teachers' perspectives on collaborative creativity, pays attention to how children's creativity is experienced and performed through collaboration, and sheds light on the cultural barriers that may emerge when trying to foster creativity in practice. A key element of this chapter includes the emergence of the concept of power, children's emotions and intersectionality, and their influence on peer group interaction.

Chapter 6 focuses on the cultural and structural issues that influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence. Apart from identifying the barriers to creativity, it presents and discusses the pressures on teachers' and children's work and progress; e.g. parental expectations, performativity and incoherent policy guidance.

Chapter 7 explores children's diverse perspectives on creativity and draws attention to issues surrounding the practical aims of the Curriculum for Excellence, namely to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice. These issues include concepts of age, authority, feelings, inclusive relationships, space, and structure.

Finally, chapter 8 concludes the thesis; it summarises the findings of the present study and outlines how each research question has been addressed. It then discusses the implications that arise from the findings of this research for debates in the literature, for policy, and for future research. Key arguments support the assertions that: feelings/emotions, peer-group interactions and space influence children's experiences of creativity; experiencing creativity within collaboration is complex and complicated, as children's differences may create power relations that enforce cultures of exclusion among children; there is a need for practices that enable every child to experience creativity and for policy documents that promote a clear framework for implementation.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of theories and research linked to the underlying concepts of this thesis, which are: agency, performativity, policy documents, collaboration, power and intersectionality. This chapter also explores theories of creativity through various theoretical prisms, but does not aim to provide a single definition of creativity; instead, it aims to provide a brief and clear picture of the diverse research that has been developed within the field of creativity, before exploring themes that have guided this study and which reflect my theoretical orientation and interests.

This chapter begins by exploring definitions of creativity as they emerged through a variety of theories, such as the philosophical, psychoanalytic/psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive, developmental and anthropological theories. Then it discusses common characteristics of dominant definitions of creativity that are used in policy documents and in educational practices. It continues by discussing the notions of agency and performativity and provides an overview of how Scottish policy documents approach creativity. This chapter also explores literature on collaborative creativity and conceptualises issues around power and intersectionality.

Throughout the chapter I present the gaps identified in the literature and provide a review of the advantages and drawbacks of theories and research in the field of creativity. For example, this chapter problematises conceptualisations of collaborative creativity on the basis that they ignore complexities and power dynamics that are part of children's peer-group interactions. This chapter concludes with the aim that has guided this study and the research questions that it seeks to explore, which are linked to how creativity is perceived, experienced and performed by children and what cultural/structural barriers children encounter.

2.2 Individual creativity, curriculum and pedagogy

2.2.1 Theories of creativity in a nutshell

Creativity is a highly complex term that has been defined through a plethora of theories, such as philosophical, psychoanalytic, behavioural, cognitive, developmental, evolutionary, clinical, social, economic, organisational, educational, historical, cultural and personality theories (Craft, 2001, Kaufman, 2009, Kaufman and Sternberg, 2010, Runco, 2004, Runco, 2007b, Starko, 2010). In this section I will provide a very brief overview of some of the dominant theories of creativity.

Discussions on creativity in the domain of philosophy began in ancient times with the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle (Gardner, 1988, Starko, 2010). Each gave his own exegesis on what creativity meant and entailed; Plato argued that creativity is divine madness that brings inspiration, while Aristotle believed that creativity emerges from rational steps (Gardner, 1988, Kaufman, 2009, Starko, 2010). Contemporary discussions in philosophy still try to define creativity. For example, Gaut (2009, 2010) questioned definitions which merely focus on originality and value and critiqued psychological theories based on personality, arguing that personality is unrelated to creativity. In contrast, he argued that creative people are highly skilled and talented (Gaut, 2009) and proposed the following definition: ‘Creativity is the capacity to produce original and valuable items by flair’ (Gaut, 2010:1041). The importance of skills possessed by individuals has also been highlighted in previous philosophical creativity research; for example, Bailin (1988) noted that skills and imagination are interlinked concepts and equally important for the development of creativity. Finally, Gaut also proposed that creativity research should not be limited to the fields of art and aesthetics but that philosophical discussions of creativity should be extended to other fields (Gaut, 2010). Examples of philosophical research outside art and aesthetics include the work of Polanyi (2009) and Harre (2009), who both examined creativity in the field of science.

Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic theories ‘explain human behaviour, development and personality traits as shaped by powerful unconscious processes’ (Starko, 2010:46). Freud, one of the advocates of the psychoanalytic prism, perceived creativity as the sublimation of drives, that is the bodily demands upon mental life (Craft, 2002, Craft, 2005) and

proposed that individuals can become creative through expressing their unconscious wishes (Sternberg, 2003).

Another theory developed through the prism of psychology is behaviourism. One of the key theorists of behaviourism, Skinner, conceptualised creativity as an individual activity and as an outcome of the stimulus and response reinforcement pair (Craft, 2000). Additionally, Skinner described creativity as expressing pre-existing ideas, rather than creating new ones (Craft, 2000, Starko, 2010).

Cognitive theories of psychology pay attention to human thought and intellect and point out the importance of cognitive mechanisms as a basis for creative thought (Runco, 2007b, Kozbelt et al., 2010). The two key theorists of cognitive theories in relation to creativity are Guilford and Gardner. Guilford incorporated creativity in his framework of intelligence (Kaufman, 2009). One of his most widely recognised methods was the discovery of divergent (when individuals work on open-ended tasks) and convergent thinking (when individuals are expected to give the one, correct answer) (Runco, 2007b). Guilford classified divergent thinking as part of human intelligence and highlighted its key characteristics as: fluency (the ability to generate many ideas), flexibility (the ability to generate different types of ideas), and originality (the ability to generate unusual ideas) (Starko, 2010:56). However, it has been argued that divergent thinking is not synonymous with creative thinking, but provides a helpful analysis of the cognitive processes that contribute to the production of original ideas (Runco, 2007b). In addition to Guilford's approach, Gardner (1993, 1988) also produced his own theory of individual creativity; he included creativity in his theory of multiple intelligences and noted that creativity is a type of gift possessed by individuals (Gardner, 1993). According to Gardner (1993), creative individuals have very good problem-solving skills and are able to produce novel outcomes.

Another theoretical prism through which creativity is studied under the umbrella of psychology is 'developmental psychology', which mostly relies on the work of Vygotsky (1966, 2004). Vygotsky created the theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), representing a developmental theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978a), and described it as: 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with other peers' (Vygotsky, 1978a:86).

The Zone of Proximal Development, in Vygotsky's view, has its roots in preschool learning and specifically in pretend play (Vygotsky, 1978c, Smolucha and Smolucha, 2012). Therefore, Vygotsky viewed play not as an activity aimed at pleasure, but as a developmental activity which creates an imaginary situation (Vygotsky, 1966, 1978c). Furthermore, he argued that imagination and play do not differ from other types of thought and that, thus, they are intellectual activities (Vygotsky, 1998, Smolucha and Smolucha, 2012). As he stated, inner speech helps individuals develop pretend play 'into a higher mental function' (Smolucha, 1992:70). For Vygotsky, creativity fell into a similar framework as play that flourishes through interactions with more mature and experienced individuals (Starko, 2010). Vygotsky's developmental framework highlights the claim that children's creativity is not as mature as adults' creativity and that children need to progress through predefined developmental stages in order to reach the highest levels of creativity (Vygotsky, 1998, Smolucha, 1992). As explained by Starko (2010:54), 'because children have fewer interests, less complex understandings, and less diverse thoughts than adults, they are considered to be capable of less mature creativity'. According to Vygotsky, creativity is expressed through the interweaving of imagination and thought, as well as of individual and social processes (Moran and John-Steiner, 2003). Overall, Vygotsky's theory took a step forward from previous developmental theories (e.g. Piagetian theory) and acknowledged the importance of a dynamic social environment for children's development. However, Vygotsky still paid considerable attention to the individual and did not study social groups (Moran and John-Steiner, 2003). His theoretical analysis of collaboration focused on the benefits to individual development of people's interactions which form mutual ZPDs (Moran and John-Steiner, 2003). In general, Vygotsky's view of collaboration highlights the benefits of interactions, but does not address power dynamics and complexities within collaboration. Therefore, a key question that arises from the above relates to whether children's diverse perspectives are taken into account in order to conceptualise creativity and implement it in practice.

In addition to the aforementioned theories, the domain of systems ideas is different yet similar to Vygotsky's ideas, in the sense that they do not address agency and do not shed light on people's diverse perspectives. From a systems models perspective, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi viewed creativity as an interaction among the domain with its rules, the individual who brings novelty, and the field of experts who judge the final products (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, Starko, 2010, Sawyer, 2006). Within the systems perspective, 'a

product is creative only if the innovation gains the acceptance of a field of experts and so transforms the culture' (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2001:337). The nature of the three interactive components has been described by Csikszentmihalyi (1999:315, mentioned in McIntyre and McIntyre, 2007), as follows:

'For creativity to occur, a set of rules and practices must be transmitted from the domain to the individual. The individual must then produce a novel variation in the content of the domain. The variation then must be selected by the field for inclusion in the domain.'

Therefore, Csikszentmihalyi's model goes beyond the position that creativity rests solely in the individual, since, in his model, he acknowledges the importance of the interaction of the aforementioned three components. However, the restriction of creativity to a domain-specific concept that relies considerably on individual innovation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2003) limits the space in which creativity can be experienced by children in the sense that, within this model, children's experiences of creativity need to be linked to innovation and novelty.

Innovation has often been linked to creativity (and not only through the systems model perspective as described above); it has been described as 'the implementation of new ideas to create something of value' (Craft, 2005:20). Additionally, innovation has been presented as the creation of 'strong and playful connections between ideas' (Craft, 2007:98) which creates something new (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009, Jeffrey, 2006). Therefore, there is a clear connection between innovation and the output/end product. Definitions of innovation also share similar ground with prominent and wide-spread definitions of creativity, (e.g. NACCCE, 1999 and Robinson, 2001, which are mentioned in the following section).

From an anthropological perspective, Ingold and Hallam (2007:2) introduced improvisation as an alternative to innovation and demonstrated that improvisation 'characterises creativity by way of its processes' while innovation characterises creativity 'by way of its products'. Furthermore, they argued that innovation belongs to the realm of modernity, as it focuses on results, products and productivity (Ingold and Hallam, 2007). By contrast, they argued, improvisation focuses on the creative processes, calling for

continual corrections and movements (Ingold and Hallam, 2007). The next section describes views on creativity that are reflected in dominant definitions of it.

2.2.2 Common characteristics of dominant definitions of creativity

Creativity literature often uses the terms ‘imagination’, ‘originality’ and ‘value’ in order to describe and define creativity. For example, commonly used definitions assert that ‘creativity is an imaginative process with outcomes that are original and of value’ (Robinson, 2001:461) and similarly, that ‘creativity is an imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value’ (NACCCE, 1999:30).

Imagination is described as ‘a special feature of human thought’ (Singer, 1999:22) that uses people’s consciousness to produce new outcomes (Singer, 1999, Joubert, 2001). It is stated that the notion of imagination incorporates both ‘imaging’ (which is associated with hypothesising) and ‘being imaginative’ (which is a prerequisite to the production of novel outcomes) (Craft, 2002, 2005). Imagination has also been linked to originality, as in the following definition: ‘Imaginative activity is the process of generating something original: providing an alternative to the expected, the conventional, or the routine’ (NACCCE, 1999:31).

Originality is another notion suggested as a core characteristic in defining creativity (Kaufman, 2009). Pope (2008) mentioned that originality is related to the unexpected, while Joubert (2001) suggested that originality is a diverse notion that may vary in terms of time, place and value. Robinson (2001) and the NACCCE report (1999) categorised originality into three levels:

- the individual level, which is associated with people’s work/outputs in relation to their own previous work/outputs
- the relative level, at which someone’s work is original in comparison with the work of other members of the same community
- the historic level, referring to new ideas for humanity.

Finally, it has been argued that imagination and originality are not enough to characterise something as creative; it is also essential that the outcome of the activity be of value

(Kaufman, 2009, NACCCE, 1999). Value has been described as ‘a judgement of some property of the outcome related to the purpose’ (NACCCE, 1999:33); therefore, according to this definition, an output cannot be characterised as creative (even though it might be imaginative and original) if it doesn’t relate to the overall purpose. Moreover, judging the value of the outputs has been described as a complex task (Joubert, 2001, Robinson, 2001).

The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) report entitled ‘All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education’ (1999), Robinson’s work (2001), and the definitions of creativity contained in both publications, have been very influential in the UK and have been used in Scottish policy documents (Education Scotland, 2012a, Education Scotland, 2012b). The positive aspect of these approaches is that they promote the democratic view of creativity, which recognises that every person has the potential to be creative (in contrast to the elite definition of creativity which states that only a few, talented individuals can be creative) (Craft, 2001, NACCCE, 1999, Robinson, 2001). However, the focus still remains on the individual and on the value of the final products, downgrading the importance of interactions among individuals and of creativity as a process. In contrast to dominant definitions such as these, this study acknowledges that creativity can be perceived and experienced differently by different people and encourages children to be actively engaged in theorising creativity. Also, it poses the question: what are children’s and teachers’ diverse perspectives on creativity? – prompting people to value equally people’s diverse and contrasting perspectives on what creativity means and on how creativity could be implemented in practice. This consideration links with the next section, which focuses on teachers’ and children’s agency.

2.2.3 Agency and school structures

2.2.3.1 Agency

It has been argued that there has been an increasing emphasis on teachers’ agency in educational policies worldwide, and the Curriculum for Excellence has also reflected these developments (Priestley and Biesta, 2013, Priestley et al., 2015). Teachers’ agency has been linked to the principle of teachers as autonomous and active developers of curricula in daily educational practice (Rogers and Wyse, 2015, Priestley et al., 2015). However, the practical implementation of teachers’ agency within the Curriculum for Excellence has been criticised. For example, Priestley et al. (2015) argue that the proposed discourse on

teacher's agency is problematic, as it focuses considerably on the 'quality' of the individual teacher and, thus, increases the burden that is being put on teachers. As they emphasise, 'it is problematic to expect that teachers become agentic, when in their practical contexts they are unable to do so' (Priestley et al., 2015:127). In particular, barriers to teachers' agency in schools may be found in centralised forms of employee control (Ball, 2003), top-down management (Davis and Smith, 2012) and performativity regimes (Ball and Olmedo, 2013).

Teachers' agency has also been linked to children's agency, in the sense that the greater the opportunities for the teacher's active agency, the greater the children's agency becomes (Rogers and Wyse, 2015). For example, children's agency may be restricted when their relationship with teachers is built on rigid, inflexible and hierarchical principles (Esser, 2016, Davis and Smith, 2012). In contrast, teachers' and children's agency can grow for teachers and children when everyone is able to participate in decision-making processes for the development of learning practices through dialogue and co-construction (Rogers and Wyse, 2015, Ang and Flewitt, 2015).

Paying attention to co-construction of learning processes through dialogue is consistent with viewing teachers' agency as interconnected with children's agency (Davis and Smith, 2012). Researchers in the field of childhood studies initially perceived children as social actors who take part in the construction of their own childhoods and as active agents (James and Prout, 1997). However, the notion of individual agency has been recently viewed as problematic within childhood studies (see for example, Gallacher et al., 2008, Tisdall, 2012). For example, Prout (2005:66) highlighted that emphasising individual agency risks 'endorsing the myth of the autonomous and independent person, as if it were possible to be a human without belonging to a complex web of interdependencies'. Additionally, Tisdall and Punch (2012:256) argued that 'agency can be accepted uncritically as being a positive thing' and illustrated that such views do not take into account that some children may not want to be active agents.

On the other hand, there have been recent approaches that frame agency as a notion involving interdependent relationships between individuals or groups (Burkitt, 2016, Moosa-Mitha, 2005, Konstantoni, 2012). As Oswell (2013:69) expresses it, this approach promotes

‘thinking about agency, not as located within the individual child faced against social structure, but as itself distributed across a network of agents or actors, both human and non-human’.

This view perceives childhood as ‘a complex social collectivity’ (Oswell, 2013:32) that incorporates differences of age, gender, class, disability and other markers of identity (Oswell, 2013). It is therefore recognised that ‘children as a collectivity comprise a multitude of experiences and positionalities’ (Oswell, 2013:77). This outlook is shared with other researchers who highlight the importance of paying attention to people’s different perspectives and identities, which play an important role in people’s interdependent relationships and agency (Esser, 2016, Konstantoni, 2012). This means that there has been an increasing trend towards focusing on interdependent relationships among people, instead of viewing agency in terms of a person’s freedom from these relationships (Moosa-Mitha, 2005).

Overall, understanding agency from a relational perspective moves away from dualisms of ‘personality and society, child and adult, action and structure, and so on’ (Esser, 2016:58) and views agents as always located in social relations (Burkitt, 2016). As Burkitt explains:

‘an understanding is created of agents as interactants, ones who are interdependent, vulnerable, intermittently reflexive, possessors of capacities that can only be practiced in joint actions, and capable of sensitive responses to others and to the situations of interaction’ (Burkitt, 2016:322).

Therefore, from this perspective, teachers’ agency cannot be seen as separate from children’s agency, and the creation of more flexible and less hierarchical environments that make children’s ‘presence’ more vibrant would enhance the agency of both teachers and children (Moosa-Mitha, 2005:382). Such practices might also support children’s creativity, as building co-constructive learning practices is believed to foster creativity (Craft et al., 2014).

2.2.3.2 Performativity

It has been argued that the educational landscape and changes in educational policies are increasingly influenced by the economy's need to create a future workforce (Roberts-Holmes, 2015). In the same vein, international measures such as PISA are influencing the ways policy makers think about school curricula and policy agendas (Wyse et al., 2014). Therefore, increasing control over how schools operate has been fostered in educational institutions (Wyse et al., 2014). The aforementioned measures are creating an image of what educational systems should look like, through a set of formulas and improvement criteria that, as suggested, can be applied universally in order to raise standards (Wrigley, 2011). Such measures engender rhetoric about 'global knowledge wars' and 'the survival of the fittest'; that is, the fittest countries and individuals (Ball, 1998:124). Many governments adopt this rationale. Putting forward plans that justify crude measures involving 'standards' and accountability, they argue that there is a demand for institutions to win in a global race (Roberts-Holmes, 2015). These factors create an environment in which education policy becomes 'subordinate to the necessities of international competition' (Ball, 2013:61, mentioned in Roberts-Holmes, 2015). In the United Kingdom, the accountability theme was first introduced in the 1980s by Margaret Thatcher, who promoted a consumerist version of parental rights (Wrigley, 2006). However, as was proved in practice, this system did not help to create dialogue or promote co-operation between teachers and parents in relation to children's learning. Instead, it increased competition for places in particular schools (Wrigley, 2006). As Wrigley (2006:24) framed it: 'crude comparisons are made between schools, regardless of the problems many people face in their lives'.

The formula for global educational reforms has been described by Ball (1998:124) as follows:

'social markets/institutional devolution = raising standards (of educational performance) = increased international competitiveness'.

Following this model, it has also been argued that key elements of the educational reform 'package' 'are embedded in three interrelated policy technologies; the market, managerialism and performativity' (Ball, 2003:215). In terms of the 'market', it has been argued that 'in order to survive in the competitive arena of inspections, league tables and

media interrogation, schools have inevitably become increasingly oriented towards the market' (Fielding, 2008:57). According to Wrigley (2006), the emphasis on market forces is related to the neoliberal theory and practice that is built on the model of 'the survival of the fittest' and encourages competition between schools and 'league tables' of school test results (Wrigley, 2006:19). Critical views of the market focus in education mention that 'the increasing divisions between schools serving different areas match the increasing social divide in a neoliberal economy' (Wrigley, 2006:19). As a continuation of 'market' policy technology, 'managerialism' refers to 'the insertion of the theories and techniques of business management and the "cult of excellence" into public sector institutions' (Ball, 1998:123). Managerialism pays particular attention to 'quality' and the main implementer of managerial policy technology in schools is said to be the school's headteacher.

The third and final aspect of the educational reform package, performativity, has been defined as follows:

'Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation (...) that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change. The performances (of individual subjects or organisations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of "quality". They stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement.' (Ball, 2000:1)

Performativity in schools has been described as 'the demand on schools and teachers to "perform", that is, to generate achievements in a clearly specified range of "outcomes"' (Priestley et al., 2015:105). It is highlighted that performativity changes the focus of schools towards 'accountability and value for money, marketisation and schools autonomy' (Priestley et al., 2015:105), that is, to concepts borrowed from commercial and market settings (Ball, 1998). Therefore, the focus in education is directed towards 'efficiency' and terms such as 'standards, performance, accountability, measurement, regulation, outcomes, outputs, effectiveness, compliance, concern, disregard, subversion and anxiety' mirror the effects of performativity in education (Kilderry, 2015). It is worth mentioning that performativity is presented in schools as 'the new common sense' and as 'something logical and desirable' (Ball and Olmedo, 2013:89). This rationale resembles what Foucault termed the 'dominant discourse' (Moss, 2015b:2). As Moss (2015b) explains, a 'dominant discourse' exerts a 'decisive influence on a particular subject' by 'projecting an imposing

“regime of truth” that exercises power over our thoughts and actions, directing or governing what we see as the “truth” and how we construct the world’. Therefore, the performativity discourse excludes ‘other ways of understanding and interpreting the world, marginalising other stories that could be told’ (Moss, 2015b:2). For example, dominant discourses of performativity do not include other ‘stories’ or more critical viewpoints that strongly criticise the universality of effectiveness and improvement (Wrigley, 2011). Holders of these viewpoints argue that performativity regimes ‘reduce everything to numbers’ and promote the idea that ‘the only thing that matters is literally what you can count’ (Wrigley, 2006:19).

The performativity regime also affects teachers’ realities and relationships between teachers and children (Fielding, 2008). Performativity discourses require a new type of teacher, formed within the logic of competition (Ball and Olmedo, 2013). As illustrated by Ball (2003:220), teachers are facing new dilemmas and challenges, as presented below:

‘Increasingly, the day-to-day practice is flooded with a baffling array of figures, indicators, comparisons and forms of competition. (...) We are unsure what aspects of work are valued and how to prioritise efforts. We become uncertain about the reasons for actions. Are we doing this because it is important, because we believe in it, because it is worthwhile? Or is it being done ultimately because it will be measured or compared?’

Within this context, teachers are embedded in a situation that imposes on them ‘a sense of being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies’ (Ball, 2003:220). Accordingly, a culture of self-regulation grows among teachers, who focus on ‘adding value’ to themselves and improving their productivity (Ball, 2003:217). This turns the focus away from thinking about ‘what they do’, and towards paying increased attention to ‘what works’ in terms of performativity and the outcomes of their work (Ball and Olmedo, 2013:91).

As the teacher’s approach changes, so does the relationship between the teacher and the children. As a result, ““having relationships” moves subtly towards “doing relationships”, towards relationship management’ (Fielding, 2008:64). As argued, the technologies of market, marketisation and performativity become deeply embedded in people’s relationships and ‘de-socialise’ them (Ball, 2003:226) because ‘performance has no room for caring’ (Ball, 2003:224). In a similar vein, Fielding (2008:64) suggests that ‘the high

performing school is an organisation in which the *personal* is used for the sake of the *functional*, and although relationships and community building are valued and considered important, all these are promoted 'for institutional purposes within the context of the market-place'.

The aforementioned concepts of performativity and assessment are linked to the notion of 'quality'. It has been argued that 'quality' is not a neutral word, but a socially constructed concept of a managerial nature that seeks to ensure 'standardisation, predictability and control' (Dahlberg, 1999:2). As Dahlberg et al. (1999:87) describe it:

'It views the world through a modernist lens, and complements modernist constructions of the young child and early childhood education. The language of quality is also the language of the early childhood institution as producer of pre-specified outcomes and the child as empty vessel, to be prepared to learn and for school, and to be helped on his or her journey of development.'

Therefore, 'quality' has been described as a notion that presents the world as 'clean', without reflecting its messiness and complexity (Dahlberg, 1999:2) and as a concept that emphasises 'universal criteria, certainty and order' (Dahlberg, 1999:105). However, as Moss (2015b:3) states, putting too much emphasis on quality 'is not only misleading; it is dangerous too'. And it is dangerous because it presents a distorted image of the problems of our society. For example, the rhetoric of quality implies that there are easy, technical solutions to many problems that can be solved with early interventions, but it does not pay much attention to structural inequalities and injustices (Moss, 2015b:3).

Scholars have argued that 'quality' should be questioned and problematised and that there is a need to move beyond 'quality' towards processes that value and acknowledge multiple perspectives and ambivalence (Moss, 2016, Dahlberg, 1999). Moving beyond 'quality' means 'working with complexity, values, diversity, subjectivity, multiple perspectives and temporal and spatial context' (Dahlberg, 1999:105). Dahlberg et al. (1999) propose the use of a new discourse, that of 'meaning making'. 'Meaning making' has been described as:

'a tool for participatory evaluation that requires a collective and democratic process of interpretation, critique and evaluation, involving dialogue and

argumentation, listening and reflection, from which understandings are deepened and judgements co-constructed' (Moss, 2016:11).

Overall, meaning making has been viewed as a deeply democratic dialogical process that avoids quantification and objectivity, but instead involves reflection and co-construction within relationships (Moss, 2016).

The notions of performativity and quality that were explored in this section are related to the question posed by this study regarding the structural barriers to creativity that may emerge when schools try to implement the aspiration of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive. The next sections present an overview of Scottish policy documents, with a particular focus on the framing of creativity within the Curriculum for Excellence and on the impact of Curriculum for Excellence's multiple identities on the practical implementation of creativity.

2.2.3.3 A brief overview of how Curriculum for Excellence and Scottish Policy Documents refer to Creativity

The idea of bringing creativity into daily school practice is promoted by the existing Scottish curriculum, the Curriculum for Excellence. Creativity has been viewed as part of active learning, which is described as a challenging and enjoyable process for the children (Scottish Executive, 2004). Therefore, particular attention has been paid by the Curriculum for Excellence to the importance of active learning as a catalyst to the provision of opportunities that children should be encouraged to use, in order to demonstrate their creativity (Scottish Executive, 2004).

As part of the policy of active learning practices, the significance of encouraging learners to be enthusiastic and motivated, but also to be able to think creatively both as individuals and as part of a group, is highlighted in the Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004). Locating creative practices in group work has also been highlighted by other Scottish policy documents; for example, the Scottish Parliament (2010) promotes the use of collaborative approaches for fostering creativity across the curriculum.

However, not all Scottish policy documents promote the idea that creativity flourishes through collaborative processes. For example, Education Scotland (2013) assigns creativity to the individual, as seen in the following definition:

‘Creativity is a process which generates ideas that have value to the individual. It involves looking at familiar things with a fresh eye, examining problems with an open mind, making connections, learning from mistakes and using imagination to explore new possibilities’ (Education Scotland, 2013:3).

Similarly, a section entitled ‘Marks on the Landscape; Inspiring creativity across the curriculum’ on the ‘Education Scotland’ website (Education Scotland, 2012b) provides a definition of creativity that presents many features in common with the NACCCE (1999) report’s definition. This definition presents the following four main characteristics of the creative process: imaginative thinking and behaviour, activities with purpose, originality, and valuable outcomes; and all these characteristics are used to define individual creativity.

Overall, the Scottish educational system seems to be on a journey towards the adoption of practices that will give more power to children, with teachers being asked, in the Curriculum for Excellence (2006), to cultivate more flexible settings. The Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act (2004), the GIRFEC – Getting It Right For Every Child – (2012) document, and the Curriculum for Excellence (2006) all seem to promote more integrated and flexible practices in educational settings. Despite this shift in Scottish educational policy, the question still remains: are those flexible practices adopted by the teachers and if so, how? The following section pays closer attention to the Curriculum for Excellence and explores different perspectives on how it can be interpreted and implemented in practice.

2.2.3.4 Curriculum for Excellence, its multiple interpretations and possible barriers to creativity

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) was first published in 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2004, Humes, 2013) and over the years has been interpreted differently by different people (Menter and Hulme, 2013, Humes, 2013). A common source of confusion regarding the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence is the question of whether it is objectives-driven or process-driven (Menter and Hulme, 2013). This tension in turn raises

questions about how the CfE is to be interpreted and implemented in practice, and also about whether it creates an enabling environment for creativity.

It has been argued that the Curriculum for Excellence has been developed in an era of globalisation and of particular emphasis on economic competitiveness, accountability and performativity (Priestley and Biesta, 2013). Therefore, schooling and educational policy have been increasingly influenced by economic pressures (Humes, 2013) that require learners to become effective contributors to a rapidly changing economy (Menter and Hulme, 2013). The Curriculum for Excellence has been developed as a Scottish Curriculum, distinctive and divergent from other policy documents such as Curricula in the United Kingdom (Humes, 2013). It has been built around four capacities that children and young people are called on to develop (Priestley and Biesta, 2013), that is, the capacities needed to become: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Priestley and Biesta, 2013). However, despite the degree of flexibility allowed in the development of the CfE, it is questionable whether it has managed to sustain and promote a progressivist approach (Priestley and Biesta, 2013, Humes, 2013). For example, although calls for co-operative learning, critical skills pedagogies and formative assessment might sound progressivist, they are not always implemented as such in practice and they often follow a neoliberal route (Priestley and Biesta, 2013). This turn to neoliberalism can be understood by paying attention to global pressures that tend to ‘push educational systems in the direction of greater convergence’ (Humes, 2013:15). For example, studies conducted by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) have been particularly influential and governments around the world try to improve their countries’ respective positions on the tables (Humes, 2013). Therefore, as part of this global landscape, it would have been difficult for the implementation of CfE to be radically different (Humes, 2013).

On the other hand, policy suggestions and, thus, suggestions by the CfE, might be understood and implemented in more critical ways (Ball and Olmedo, 2013). For example, CfE has also been interpreted as a ‘progressive, modern and motivating curriculum’ (Ecclestone, 2013:77) that focuses on ‘dialogic pedagogies, active learning and learner autonomy’ (Priestley et al., 2015:114). Furthermore, it has been suggested that CfE has opened up a new direction, moving towards interdisciplinarity and beyond rigid divisions and categorisations of subjects (Biesta et al., 2015).

Research on creativity has shown that the way curricula are organised and implemented in practice may provide different degrees of opportunity for cultivating children's creativity (Craft, 2003b). In particular, it has been argued that curricula that promote interdisciplinarity foster creativity, in contrast with curricula that merely provide opportunities for learning through discrete subjects (Craft, 2003b). Additionally, it has been highlighted that curricula that offer opportunities for flexible practices that can be adapted to the needs of each particular classroom are also supportive of creativity (Craft, 2003b, Ferrari and Wyse, 2016). Therefore, a crucial question that is raised here is whether the CfE is implemented as a rigid or as a flexible curriculum and whether it creates conditions that foster or constrain creativity.

2.3 Collaborative creativity, power, progressive and productive pedagogies, and intersectionality

2.3.1 Collaborative creativity

Creativity has not only been defined as an individual characteristic (as mentioned in section 2.2), but has also been seen as an element of group work. For example, Paulus (1999:779) stated that 'Group creativity is the creation, development, evaluation and promotion of novel ideas in groups'. Writing about group creativity, Paulus (1999) focused his analysis on people's interactions that aim at the production of novel ideas. However, his analysis did not draw attention to how creative interactions are practised and experienced; instead, his description of creative interactions focused on skills and characteristics that individuals need, such as extensive experience, knowledge and a risk-taking attitude.

In a similar vein, other researchers have acknowledged the importance of the social for the flourishing of creativity. For example, Chappell (2007) highlighted the need for balancing the personal and the collective voice. The focus of Chappell's (2007) research was 'teaching for creativity' and she provided examples of interactions between teachers and children which took place in dance lessons. Chappell (2007) stated that balancing the personal and the collective voice is not easy to achieve and involves complexities. However, her analysis did not shed light on complexities and interactions among children,

but projected an inflexible dichotomy between children and adults which made it difficult for the reader to understand the heterogeneity of children's experiences. This motivated the research question of this study, on how children's creativity is experienced and performed through collaboration.

Additionally, there have been recent attempts by psychologically-driven literature to incorporate group-creativity into predominantly individually-focused definitions and frameworks of creativity. For example, one of the prominent writers in the field of creativity, Jane Piirto (2011:35), added the term 'group trust' as one of the five attitudes of creative people (the others were self-discipline, openness to experience, willingness to take risks and tolerance). Her explanation of creativity in group work was as follows:

'Working in a group creates interdependency, as each member has a role to play, and a job to do, and they cannot be egoistical or selfish, or the whole project will suffer. One person cannot dominate; everyone must play and experience together' (Piirto, 2011:35).

However, although Piirto (2011) drew attention to the importance of interactions and interdependencies among group members, her analysis appears to be reductionist. As mentioned in the above quote, Piirto (2011) urges individuals not to be egoistical or selfish and to avoid dominating others. The language in which these arguments are phrased seems to create a potentially punitive environment for individuals (they *cannot* be egoistical/ they *cannot* dominate) and to propose 'recipes' for the correct implementation of creativity in groups. However, it is unclear how such approaches can be helpful for understanding and unravelling the web of complexities in people's interactions, of power dynamics and of dynamic relationships. This raises the question of whether the field of psychology has the tools for providing an in-depth analysis of how creativity is practised and experienced in groups.

Anna Craft's research (2001, 2005) has led the way towards incorporating creativity in education from a democratic viewpoint, which holds that everybody has the potential to be creative. Anna Craft's numerous publications have provided a clear and comprehensive analysis of creativity from a psychological point of view. In contrast with other prominent theorists of creativity (e.g. Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, Sternberg, Piirto), Craft expanded

scholarly discussions on creativity by highlighting the need to pay attention not only to individual, but also to collective creativity. As she explained:

‘It is increasingly argued that creativity actually belongs in “communities”, residing in the “spaces” between individual minds, rather than being sited entirely in the individual. The implications of this stance are that creativity is rooted in a democratic practice of sharing and developing learning, that it is less a result of genius and more of shared ideas’ (Craft, 2003a:151).

Craft (2005) proposed that creativity flourishes through dialogic practices that are expressed when people are in relationship with one another. Craft (2005:136) defined the notion of ‘relationship’ as ‘dynamic interaction’, taking place between teacher and learner, but also between learner and learner. Such dynamic and dialogic practices and relationships have also been described as co-constructive (Craft et al., 2014). Co-constructive relationships involve balanced child- and adult-initiated learning, shared reflections and ongoing/continuous dialogue between teachers and children (Craft et al., 2014).

Researchers who believe that creativity is fostered through dialogic, co-constructive relationships have integrated creativity into a constructivist framework of learning (Craft, 2005, Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015). Constructivism offers an alternative and oppositional viewpoint to the behaviourist learning approach and to the premise that children’s minds are empty vessels that need to be filled with knowledge (Craft, 2005). Thus, adopting a constructivist framework allowed researchers to move beyond conditioning, towards practices of greater engagement (Craft, 2005). Moreover, constructivism creates interactive and generative learning environments in which learners are encouraged to make connections and construct knowledge for themselves (Craft, 2005). Craft (2005:53) also argued that “‘creativity” and “learning” in education are not distinguishable if we take a constructivist approach to learning’. Therefore, it is argued that, within this framework, learners interact, communicate, collaborate, improve their ideas and boost their creativity (Pollard, 2012, Wright, 2010).

Later research led by Kerry Chappell and Anna Craft extended the discussion on creative learning practices, proposing the promotion of dialogue and co-creation in partnerships, not only between teacher-learner and learner-learner (as previously proposed by Craft,

2005), but also among academics, teachers, artists and secondary school students. As a response to the English authoritative and top-down school system, Craft et al. (2012:593) suggested that ‘there is a vital role for co-designed journeys rather than to responding to marching orders, in an era of uncertainty and change’. Their research included two projects, the ‘Aspire project’ (Craft et al., 2008, Chappell and Craft, 2011) and the ‘Dance Partners for Creativity’ project (Chappell and Craft, 2011). Both projects aimed at involving various partners in a co-creative, dialogic and transformative process that would build opportunities for shared learning and creativity (Chappell and Craft, 2011). One of the key elements of this process was that partners were ‘actively engaged in transforming *what is* to what *might be*’ (Craft et al., 2012:592, original emphasis). The characteristics of the projects involved ‘working from the “bottom up”, participation, debate and difference, openness to action, and embodied and verbalised idea exchange’ (Chappell and Craft, 2011:363). Overall, while these projects promoted an emancipatory agenda for transformation, the researchers did not touch upon the complexities and power dynamics operating among all the different partners (Chappell and Craft, 2011). Furthermore, the ‘Dance Partners for Creativity’ project did not involve students as part of the co-creative process; instead, it only involved partnership between teachers and artists in designing the steps that would enhance students’ creativity.

Research led by Davis (2011, 2013) also involved collaboration between different partners in projects across European countries and used strength-based and social justice approaches to encourage people’s collaboration and interactions. The CREANOVA project studied young people’s and adults’ perspectives on creativity and innovation and concluded that environments that value people’s interactions and collaborative relationships foster creativity (Davis et al., 2011), highlighting that ‘social interaction was a key component of creativity and the higher the social interaction in an environment, the more creative and innovative it was’ (Davis, 2013:14). For example, participants in the project argued that opportunities for dialogue, for posing questions and for working in supportive structures that rejected top-down hierarchies laid a solid foundation for the flourishing of their creativity (Davis et al., 2011, Davis, 2013). The CREANOVA project also brought people’s diversities to the fore; in particular, the findings of the project demonstrated that people valued differences and diversity highly and believed that tolerant environments promoted creativity (Davis et al., 2011, Davis, 2013). However, CREANOVA mainly focused on young people and adults (over 16 years of age) and did

not explore children's views on creativity. Despite that, the key findings of this project could be linked to the study of creativity in childhood and could encourage researchers to study collaborative creativity in greater depth, addressing and exploring the diversities among children through promoting inclusive participation in schools.

Definitions of creativity display great variety over time and through different disciplines (e.g. philosophy, psychology, education) (Craft, 2005). Despite great interest in the field of creativity, it has been noted that there is a lack of an empirical base in relation to how creativity is promoted and implemented in school environments (Davies et al., 2013). Dominant definitions of creativity are based on psychological frameworks that mainly focus on individual creativity (NACCCE, 1999, Craft, 2005), but there is also growing interest in studying collaborative creativity (Chappell, 2007, Chappell and Craft, 2011, Craft et al., 2012, Craft, 2003a, Craft et al., 2014, Davis et al., 2011, Davis, 2013, Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015). However, it has been highlighted that there are gaps in the literature that need further research. These gaps include:

- the balance between individual and collective creativity (Craft, 2005:xxiv)
- the nature of adult engagement with learners in nurturing creativity (Craft, 2005:xxiv).

Additionally, Davies et al. (2013) highlight two other gaps: first, they show the surprising lack of research that explores the effectiveness of creative approaches and the diversity of learners (Davies et al., 2013). Second, they point to another under-researched area, involving participatory approaches that listen to and promote children's voices (Davies et al., 2013).

2.3.2 Power, progressive and productive pedagogies

The previous section discussed how collaborative creativity is framed in the literature. Collaboration involves interactions and relationships and, according to Foucault (1997), people's relationships are steeped in power. In order to explore how children perceive, experience and perform collaborative creativity, as well as to pay attention to possible barriers that may be linked to exclusive cultures, it is important for this research to pay attention to the way power operates within relationships. Therefore, this section begins by

examining power, and does so by drawing on the work of Michel Foucault. Then, this section explores theories of progressive and productive pedagogies, in order to explore possible ways to build enabling school environments to childhood creativity.

Michel Foucault has not provided a general theory of power in his work and he was not interested in answering the question ‘What is power?’ (Gallagher, 2004). When he focused on the question of ‘how’, it was not, he argued, in order to minimise the importance of ‘what’ and ‘why’, but in order to ‘know if it is legitimate to imagine a power which unites in itself a what, a why, and a how’ (Foucault, 1982:786). Foucault provided a platform on which to explore ‘how power is exercised, under what conditions and with what effects’ (Gallagher, 2004:53-54), paying particular attention to ‘what happens when individuals exert power over others’ (Foucault, 1982:786).

Foucault approached power as complex, in flux, and part of the realm of ‘power over actions’, by which he meant that power cannot be possessed, but is always exercised (Gallagher, 2004:54), and exists only when put into action (Foucault, 1982). Foucault drew a distinction between a relationship of violence and a relationship of power: In particular, a relationship of violence ‘acts upon a body or upon things’, ‘it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities’ (Foucault, 1982:789). On the other hand, a relationship of power ‘does not act directly and immediately on others’. Rather, ‘it acts upon their actions’; it is ‘a set of actions upon other actions’ (Foucault, 1982:789). Therefore, according to Foucault (1982), there is a significant difference between violence and power: violence has destructive effects, whilst power enables myriad possibilities, reactions and results to emerge. In Foucault’s (1982:789) words, power ‘induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult’. Overall, power is exercised ‘only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free’ (Foucault, 1982:790), where ‘free’ is used to describe subjects who face a range of possibilities.

Since power only exists when it is put into action (Foucault, 1982), it is rooted in relationships between people. In his book ‘The politics of truth’, Foucault argued that:

‘Power is relations; power is not a thing, it is a relationship between two individuals, a relationship which is such that one can direct the behaviour of another or determine the behaviour of another’ (Foucault, 1997:155).

Power relations are complex, interrelated, and mobile (Foucault, 1978), but ‘primarily productive rather than repressive’ (Gallagher, 2004:64). Foucault argued that if power merely involved repression, then it would be difficult to explain the fact that people obey it (Foucault, 1980). Instead, in Foucauldian terms, power ‘needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression’ (Foucault, 1980:119). Following on from that, Foucault (1977) has also argued that power cannot be pinpointed, as it is everywhere; it pervades various institutions and spaces aiming to create normality (Andersen, 2003). Practices of normalisation (which are non-violent) are exercised by teachers, doctors and other ‘judges of normality’ through processes of training, observation, correction and surveillance (Foucault, 1977:304).

Understanding how power is exercised, how it moves and what effects it produces is very important for the present research. In particular, Foucault’s work on power has inspired this study to focus on how children’s experiences of creativity are influenced by the way power is exercised between individuals, groups of individuals, or individuals and structures/institutions. Apart from understanding the complex interactions between children that influence their experiences of creativity, this study is also interested in exploring how we can build enabling school environments to childhood creativity. The field of progressive and critical pedagogy might be able to offer some useful tools for the purpose.

To this end, Giroux (2011) argued that critical pedagogy offers a language of hope and possibility that moves beyond understanding how power operates and offers the chance of imagining and creating environments of justice and equality. From this point of view, pedagogy is not merely a set of strategies for teaching a pre-specified subject; it is not a ‘transmission model of teaching’, and it does not involve ‘passive absorption of knowledge’ (Giroux, 2011:5). Giroux (2011:83) highlights that the goals of education nowadays focus considerably on economic growth and that ‘pedagogy is reduced to a matter of taste, individual choice, and job training’. The field of critical and progressive pedagogy offers an alternative prospect: that of creating a more meaningful pedagogy that becomes more than a mere transfer of received knowledge (Giroux, 2011). Such pedagogy would take into consideration the context of the classroom and would ‘enable students to connect their lives and everyday experiences to what they learn’ (Giroux, 2011:82). In that

way learning would be facilitated through the combined action of children and teachers (Dewey, 2011) and children would be encouraged to connect their interests and passions with the learning process, an act that would strengthen their motivation (Giroux, 2011).

However, critical and progressive pedagogies have been criticised for being purely theoretical and for not providing many empirical accounts of actual classroom practices (Lingard, 2008). They have also been criticised for underplaying the importance of the politics of racial, gender, ethnic and other types of differences, and thus for not sufficiently respecting the histories and cultures of all children (Lingard, 2008). The field of productive pedagogies aims to provide a pedagogical theory in the middle ground (Lingard, 2008). Progressive pedagogies theory is strongly informed by critical and progressive educational theories, in addition to which, it is interested in both ‘theories and data’, ‘politics and instruction’ (Lingard, 2008:215). Furthermore, productive pedagogies recognise children’s different identities and aim to provide a supportive environment for everyone (Lingard et al., 2003). They aim at the creation of flexible environments, where children feel comfortable in sharing their diverse experiences and are not scared to fail or to take risks (Hayes et al., 2006). Engagement with the difference dimension gives the concept of productive pedagogies a postmodernist aspect (Lingard et al., 2003). Therefore, in their aims, productive pedagogies offer the possibility of classroom practices that are guided by a vision of a socially just and equitable world, but do so through paying attention to the richness of the classroom experience and the complexity of learners’ identities.

Overall, this section has explored issues of power, along with progressive and productive pedagogies. It demonstrated that the Foucauldian analysis of power is important as it enables my research to explore how school cultures influence childhood creativity. Within the Foucauldian understanding of power as productive, this research will explore how childhood creativity is influenced by the way power operates and creates cultures of inclusion or exclusion.

Theories of critical and progressive pedagogies will inform those parts of this study that focus on the direction of educational aims and of education in general (as they are reflected, for instance, in policy documents such as the CfE). As an example, critical pedagogy highly criticises the treatment of pedagogy as a commodity and asserts the need to move beyond practices of knowledge consumption towards more dialogic and transformative

classroom practices. Taking these criticisms into account, this study will explore how the CfE was implemented in practice and will pay attention to the structural issues that influence childhood creativity within the context of the CfE.

Finally, this section has presented some of the key arguments of productive pedagogies literature. It demonstrated that productive pedagogies propose a middle ground theory for classroom practice, by synthesising arguments of critical/progressive pedagogies (for example, the view of pedagogy not as a commodity, but as the source of a transformative vision for a socially just education and society) with the importance of respecting and valuing children's differences and different identities.

The following section sheds light on children's differences which construct their diverse and multiple identities. It highlights the importance of paying attention to intersectionality and to the usefulness of this approach for obtaining a deeper understanding of how children's creativity is experienced and embodied within participation.

2.3.3 Children's identities and intersectionality

Understandings of the notion of identity have varied over time; identity was initially conceived as stable, fixed and unchanging, but recent theories have conceptualised it as shifting, changing, contested and multiple (Yuval-Davis, 2006). For poststructural theorists, 'identity choice is produced through discourse', with discourse referring to the 'frameworks we use to make sense of the world intellectually, politically, emotionally, physically, implicitly and explicitly' (Mac Naughton et al., 2009a). It has been argued that part of the process by which children form their identities is the classification of one's self in relation to others, as well as the 'recognition of the significance of differences' that 'arises through the particularities of their relationships with one another' (James, 1993). This links to the notion of 'belonging', which has been described as a 'dynamic process and not a reified fixity' (Yuval-Davis, 2006:199). Yuval-Davis (2006:199) has also argued that people can belong in many different ways and that 'belonging can be an act of self-identification or identification by others'. Processes of belonging, being and becoming are not straightforward, but instead are full of tensions (Mac Naughton et al., 2009a). It has been emphasised that 'as children gain access to competing discourses of gender, "race"

and class', they attempt to 'classify which forms of becoming are possible and desirable' (Mac Naughton et al., 2009a:36).

Children's social identities have begun to be examined in an intersectional way within the field of childhood studies (see, for example, Konstantoni 2011 and Kustatscher, 2015). The term 'intersectionality' has been used to examine how axes of difference such as race, gender, social class, disability, age and so on interact and affect the relations of power in groups of people (Crenshaw, 1991, Cho et al., 2013, Konstantoni et al., 2017, Davis, 2008, Yuval-Davis, 2011). Relations of power among people produce and sustain social, political and economic inequalities (Konstantoni et al., 2017) that are often 'overlooked and erased' (Bilge, 2013:407). This insight prompts us to pay closer attention to the roots of intersectionality and the discussion initiated by Crenshaw (1989, 1991) on the invisibility of women of colour, who could fit within discourses of either race or gender, but could not use both at the same time to define their identities. It has been explained that

'intersectionality does not create a shopping list of categories that can be deployed to shut down discussion of specific oppressions – "yes, race is important, but what about...?"!' (Bilge, 2013:420)

Instead, it has been proposed that interpretations of intersectionality should be consistent with its initial focus, that of generating 'counter-hegemonic and transformative knowledge production' (Bilge, 2013:405) and 'counter-hegemonic praxis that seeks to challenge and displace hegemonic whiteness' (Konstantoni and Emejulu, 2017:8). It has also been proposed that such argumentation and praxis need to inform the way intersectionality is being used within the field of childhood studies (Konstantoni and Emejulu, 2017). More precisely, it has been highlighted that:

'Childhood studies can operationalise intersectionality in ways that avoid deauthorising Black feminist scholars and that attend to the complex dynamics of race, class and gender – alongside age, disability, sexuality and other categories of difference' (Konstantoni and Emejulu, 2017:10).

Therefore, it is suggested that intersectionality in childhood studies should move beyond its position as a framework used to analyse complex interactions within social identities, by calling attention to the origins of the notion and its links to counter-hegemonic knowledge and praxis (Konstantoni and Emejulu, 2017).

The following sections present different components of children's identities and draw connections with research on collaborative creativity.

2.3.3.1 Gender

Research and theoretical discussions on gender have varied over the years and emerged through different disciplines. Early work in the field of psychology has proposed understanding gender through developmental lenses. In particular, Kohlberg's (1966) influential work involved an adaptation of Piaget's (1929) theories (both authors cited in Morrow, 2006:93) of universal stages of development, proposing that 'children in particular ages notice differences between people, learn their gender label and act accordingly' (Morrow, 2006:93). Such developmental perspectives have been criticised for not taking account of children's views and experiences of gender and for ignoring children's competence and ability to undertake an active role when shaping their gendered lives (Morrow and Connolly, 2006, Morrow, 2006). Additionally, it is shown that theories of developmental psychology create fixed categories of boys and girls and, thus, do not leave space for discussions of the socially constructed notion of gender and of children's diverse experiences of gender (Morrow, 2006). Moreover, Burman's writings (2008, 2012) highlight the need to deconstruct developmental psychology, or, in other words, to work towards anti-psychology. Burman (2008, 2012) emphasises that developmentalism is constructed within discourses of imperialism and racism and calls on researchers to adopt a critical stance towards dominant discourses of developmental psychology, especially when it comes to issues of race and gender. This theoretical position originates in an article by Hardman (2001), entitled 'Can there be an anthropology of children?' In this work, Hardman (2001) discusses how psychological approaches have been developed and highlights that psychological approaches often draw upon results of experiments conducted in the Western world and generalise these results to explain children's abilities in every part of the world. As Hardman (2001:504) explains, through these theories, children are viewed as

'helpless spectators in a pressing environment which affects and produces their every behaviour. They see the child as continually assimilating, learning and responding to the adult, having little autonomy, contributing nothing to social values or behaviour except the latent outpourings of earlier acquired experiences'.

In her article, Hardman (2001) offers an alternative view to the above, arguing that children have much to offer if we listen to them, and that they should not be viewed as passive.

A different direction has been taken by ‘socialisation’, or, in other words, ‘social-learning’ or ‘sex role’ theories (Skelton and Francis, 2003, Mac Naughton, 2000). Such theories have moved forward from viewing gender as merely innate and biologically constructed and shift our attention to it as a component of socialisation processes (Skelton and Francis, 2003). However, it has been highlighted that socialisation theories do not fully support gender equity, because they overemphasise and depend on the view that children act like ‘sponges’ (Mac Naughton, 2000:25), soaking up gender stereotypes from adults and peers of the same gender (Skelton and Francis, 2003). Therefore, it is argued that such theories create inflexible, rigid and fixed distinctions between two gender categories – boys and girls – reflecting the pre-existing social structures of the world and the gender meanings that are widely seen as desirable, understandable and acceptable (Mac Naughton, 2000).

In contrast to the aforementioned theories, ‘relational’ theories of gender offer an alternative, ‘beyond the simplistic view of the child as a sponge’ (Mac Naughton, 2000:25). Relational theories put forth children’s active role in forming and reforming their identities when interacting with others (Skelton and Francis, 2003, Mac Naughton, 2000). Within this framework, ‘there is not a fixed, coherent, immutable gender identity to be learnt’ (Mac Naughton, 2000:28), but instead, gender is seen as fluid, multiple and relational (Skelton and Francis, 2003, Mac Naughton, 2000, Renold, 2005) and children are viewed as active agents that get involved in complex processes of ‘doing gender’ (Renold, 2005:4). Gender relational theorists have also acknowledged that gender intersects with other parts of children’s identities, such as race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, ability and culture (Connolly, 2004, Renold, 2005, Skelton, 2010, Skelton and Francis, 2011). Finally, relational theories do not support generalisations implying that ‘all girls’ and ‘all boys’ share the same characteristics; for example, the belief that all girls are quiet and all boys are good at science (Connolly, 2004, Morrow, 2006, Skelton and Francis, 2003).

Research on creativity tends to view gender as fixed and divided between the dominant categories of boys and girls (Craft, 2005). The way gender is placed in creativity research

relates to differences between men's and women's creative abilities (Craft, 2005). Furthermore, gender and creativity is a significantly under-researched area and needs to be advanced both theoretically and empirically, with support from relevant data (Craft, 2005). Therefore, gender relational theories might bring a different view to creativity research, one that places emphasis on the fluidity and multiplicity of gender and acknowledges the importance of intersections between gender and different aspects of children's identities (Connolly, 2004, Renold, 2005, Skelton, 2010, Skelton and Francis, 2011). This raises the question of whether there is space for gender and other parts of children's identities to shape the way children perceive and experience creativity.

2.3.3.2 Friendship, Interactions and Emotions

Research on children's friendships can be traced back to the 1930s, when researchers from the field of developmental psychology started using 'sociometric research techniques to discover the patterning of children's relationships with their peers' (James and James, 2012:55). Through this process, researchers observed socially isolated children and children with unstable friendships, and such instances motivated them 'to plot out their interrelationships by noting down peer-group interactions' (James and James, 2012:55). However, research of this kind was questioned, as it was not clear whether the interactions reflected popularity or actual friendship (James and James, 2012).

Other research seeks to examine the nature of children's friendships (James and James, 2012). For example, research conducted by Bigelow and Lo Gaipa (1980, mentioned in James and James, 2012:55), proposed that children's friendships change in type according to age. As they argue, proximity and common interests are among the most influential parameters in the formation of young children's friendships (James and James, 2012). They also suggest that friendships develop from the stage of instability in early childhood to the stage of stability and intimacy in adulthood (James and James, 2012). This view, however, does not take into account that adults' friendships are also sometimes unstable and vary between close friendship and acquaintanceship.

Research on children's friendships has also found links between friendship and gender. For example, Thorne (1993) posed the question of whether boys and girls have different cultures and, thus, form different types of friendships. She reviewed the arguments of different-cultures literature and summarised them as follows: 'different-cultures literature

contrasts the larger, hierarchical groups of boys with the smaller groups that girls typically form pairs of best friends' (Thorne, 1993:94). However, Thorne (1993) adopted a critical stance towards the above; drawing on her own experience as researcher, she placed emphasis on the many exceptions to these fixed conceptualisations of boys' and girls' distinct types of friendships. For example, she argued that stereotypes that require boys to be 'tough' and girls to be 'nice' were not always confirmed (Thorne, 1993). Thorne's (1993) research also revealed that there are boys who are loners and who do not necessarily prefer to hang out in large groups, as well as girls who choose to interact in large groups.

Following the thread of intersectionality, research has also explored the significance of various elements of children's social identities (such as gender, ethnicity, class, academic achievement and interests) in children's friendships (Connolly, 1998b, Mac Naughton et al., 2009a, Mac Naughton et al., 2009b, Renold, 2005, Thorne, 1993). Such research mainly paid attention to one part of children's identities and explored its influence on children's friendships. However, Konstantoni (2011:46, drawing on research by Devine and Kelly, 2006, Devine et al., 2008) argued that

'the actual experience of friendship patterns and the varied influences that may guide such patterns are rather complex, with multiple and intersected factors coming into play'.

Therefore, the need has been highlighted for more research that pays close attention to social identities and intersectionality in children's friendship groups.

Following this pathway, there has been a growing interest in exploring children's emotions beyond the sphere of the individual, by examining the role of emotions and their intersections (e.g. with gender, ethnicity, social class) in the lives of children and young people (Ahn, 2010, Zembylas, 2011, Gordon, 2006, Blazek and Kraftl, 2015, Kustatscher, 2017). By viewing emotions as generated through interactions, one can identify links between emotions and the form that children's interactions, belonging and friendships take (Harden, 2012, Anthias, 2013, Kustatscher, 2017). Kustatscher's (2017) analysis of children's emotional geographies through an intersectional lens has been particularly useful in conceptualising the significance of this kind of research for analysing children's relationships. Kustatscher (2017) presented empirical data about children who enhanced their bonds through emphasis on their branded coats, which highlighted the involvement

of emotions in the performance of gender and class. She also explained that children's performances of belonging were related to multiple facets of their identities, such as language, nationality and social class. Kustatscher (2017) concluded that emotions are crucial for shaping children's intersectional identities and forms of belonging. She also suggested that children's belonging is multiple, complex and 'steeped in relations of power'. Finally, she highlighted the need to view children's identities through an intersectional, poststructuralist prism that places emphasis on 'emotions, cultural and political practices which reiteratively construct dominant social hierarchies, privileges and disadvantages' (Kustatscher, 2017:74).

The richness, diversity and multiplicity of children's identities and the expression of such complexity through children's interactions and friendships has much to offer the field of creativity, which, so far, views children as a homogeneous group and merely pays attention to interactions between adults and children (see for example, Craft, 2005, Jeffrey and Craft, 2004). As described above, there is huge diversity in children's identities, and their interactions are extremely complex. Therefore, exploring such interactions would help research into and analysis of collaborative creativity to move forward.

2.3.3.3 Ethnicity and 'race'

The meaning of ethnicity is often confused with 'race'; although the two terms are connected to some degree, they have different meanings (James and James, 2012). Ethnicity has a variety of dimensions, such as cultural heritage, language, religion, history, nationality and physical traits (James and James, 2012, Connolly, 2003b). Race is often understood as part of the broad social phenomenon of ethnicity (Connolly, 2003b).

Studies from the 1920s by developmental psychologists showed that children are able not only to recognise racial differences, but also to develop negative attitudes and prejudices from the age of three (Connolly, 2003b). This kind of research was helpful in the sense that it highlighted young children's capacity to experience racism. However, it was heavily criticised for its inability to deeply explore and understand how 'race' affects children's lives and, also, for its reproduction of the view that racial prejudice is something natural due to people's inevitable tendency to categorise (Connolly, 2003b).

‘Race’ has also been defined in biological terms, but such views are still debated, highly problematised and criticised, making ‘race’ a complex and contested term (Davis and Mac Naughton, 2009). There has been strong opposition to the biological basis of ‘racial’ classification, mainly because of the long history of ‘race’ as a concept invented to create hierarchies among human bodies (Davis and Mac Naughton, 2009). However, precisely because of this long history and the political implications of the notion of ‘race’, it has been argued that it is sometimes necessary to use biological terms, such as ‘black’ and ‘white’, in order to ‘politically organise and challenge racism’ (Davis and Mac Naughton, 2009:4). In the book *Racist America*, Feagin (2000:93) argues that the colour-blind perspective was common among white elites in the 1960s and 1970s, when people ‘did not want to see race anymore, just individuals’. However, colour-blindness often ‘covers up continuing racist thought and practice that is often less overt and more disguised’ (Feagin, 2000:93). Due to the aforementioned historical origins and implications of ‘race’, Davis and McNaughton (2009:4) used inverted commas to highlight the problematic history of the term, which had been used to ‘classify, name, oppress, repress, and silence specific groups of people’. As racism still exists and constructs people’s relationships, Davis and McNaughton (2009) argue that the term ‘race’ should be used, in order to recognise ‘the struggles and/or privileges groups have faced’.

Recent research argues that ‘race’ is context-specific, complex and fluid (Connolly, 2008, Connolly, 2003b, Connolly, 1998a) and has seen children as actively engaged participants in constructing and reconstructing racial identities (Connolly, 2003b). From this theoretical perspective, it has been maintained that there is a need to move away from adult-centric understandings of children, childhood and children’s experiences of racism and, instead, focus more on understanding ‘the meaning of race and ethnicity *to them* and its reality in, and implications for, their lives’ (Van Ausdale and Feagin, 2001:213). Similarly, it has been argued that it is important to acknowledge that young children are neither innocent nor ignorant about ‘race’ (Davis and Mac Naughton, 2009). For example:

‘Racial ethnic concepts inform much of children’s social activity - from how children perceive themselves, to how they select friends, to how they explain social life, to the ways they develop understanding of social hierarchies and power’ (Van Ausdale and Feagin, 2001:214).

Therefore, comprehensive research into and analysis of experiences of ‘race’ in childhood would require researchers to pay more attention to the complex, contradictory and context-specific nature of racism in children’s social worlds (Connolly, 2003b), while also leaving space for children to explain their realities and experiences in their own terms (Van Ausdale and Feagin, 2001).

2.3.3.4 Disability

Theories and research on disabled children are varied and diverse. The medical model of disability reflected a growing objectification of the child through twentieth-century medical knowledge (James, 1993). This objectification started with children’s bodies and with diseases or disorders these bodies carried and was followed by an increasing tendency to create an image of the ‘normal’ child that not only focused on diseases, but was also extended to the social space surrounding the child (James, 1993). This kind of approach created stereotypes of ‘normality’ and ‘abnormality’ and promoted a reality in which children were afraid of being different (James, 1993). Parents were often influenced by such approaches and, as James (1993:43) put it:

‘through distancing their child from objectifying images of the child, they were able to categorise and homogenise that which their children were not’.

The aforementioned discourse was at first related to medication and treatment regimes, but it gradually involved other aspects of children’s experiences and identities, such as their abilities (James, 1993). Overall, the discourse that was advanced through the medical model of disability presented disabled children as ‘deviant’, ‘inferior’ (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002:2), ‘lesser’ (Tisdall, 2012:183), ‘passive’, ‘vulnerable’ and ‘dependent’ (Davis and Watson, 2002:159). As Corker and Shakespeare (2002:2) demonstrated, the medical model of disability reflects ‘the modernist idea of the rational, independent subject’, which modernism makes possible through its compliance with systems of privileging based on different axes of people’s identities (disability, race, gender, class etc.).

Corker and Shakespeare (2002) argued that the social model of disability offered a different direction, in the sense that it helped to establish the conceptualisation of disability and impairment as distinct notions, with disability being viewed as socially constructed.

These authors noted that the social model proposed that disability is not static, but changes through different social and economic structures and cultures. Finally, the same study showed that an important contribution of the social model is the political project of disabled people's emancipation from oppressive regimes and discourses.

However, both the medical and the social models had the drawback of trying to explain disability universally and thus, of creating narratives that did not pay attention to important dimensions of disabled people's complex and diverse experiences (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002). These models were critiqued by post-structuralism, which put forth the view that 'modernism's focus on the individual as an autonomous agent needs to be deconstructed, contested and troubled' (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002:3). Similarly, post-structuralist discourses critiqued the social model for ignoring the complexities of disabled people's lives (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002).

Viewing disability through a post-structuralist lens means that 'subjects are not the autonomous creators of themselves or their social worlds, but are embedded in a complex network of social relations' (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002:3). Disability has also been framed as a postmodern concept, which puts emphasis on the heterogeneity of disabled children as a group, and also sheds light on the diversity of their experiences (Davis and Watson, 2002). As argued:

'Considering the range of impairments under the disability umbrella; considering the different ways in which they impact on individuals and groups over their lifetime; considering the intersection of disability with other axes of inequality; and considering the challenge which impairment issues to notions of embodiment, we believe it could be argued that disability is the ultimate postmodern concept' (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002:15).

Supporters of the postmodern and post-structuralist framings of disability emphasise that taking this direction does not deprive disability studies of the radical edge that contributes to the emancipation of disabled people (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002). Instead, post-structuralism can be used to extend the notion of emancipation from something that is the same for everyone to a concept that is open and flexible enough to include diverse voices, encouraging people to self-identify with what emancipation means to them, and making it possible for them to lead the way towards their emancipation in an inclusive society

(Corker and Shakespeare, 2002). It has also been argued that inclusive societies are not built merely by removing structural barriers; rather, more consistent and systematic attempts to address personal, institutional and cultural values are also essential (Davis and Watson, 2002). For example, research by Davis and Watson (2000:213) suggested that environments help disabled children to be active participants

‘...when they are provided with opportunities to interact with other children on an equitable basis, their participation is properly planned and not reliant on short term adult assessments of competency, and when they are able to work with reflexive adults’.

Therefore, post-structuralism has helped to establish a new discourse that presents disabled children as agents and competent participants rather than as passive and dependent human beings (Davis and Watson, 2002, Davis and Watson, 2000).

Considering the above, it is difficult to see how research on creativity that puts forth the image of the gifted creative individual, able to produce novel outcomes (Gardner, 1993), is able to engender inclusive environments that can be supportive for every child. Furthermore, approaches linked to developmental psychology still do not seem to acknowledge the struggles of disability movements, since psychology uses testing to create a hierarchy (Alderson and Goodey, 1998) in childhood, with disabled children placed at the bottom of this hierarchy and therefore viewed as less creative. For example, research on creativity from a developmental perspective based on Vygotskian theories complies with a universal model of ‘normal’ child development that ‘pathologises those children who fail to achieve certain developmental criteria’ (Davis and Watson, 2002:159). There have been some exceptions (but still predominantly based on developmental psychology) to the research on creativity, in works which have begun to talk about the importance of dialogic practices (Craft, 2005), relationships, dynamic interactions and co-creation (Craft et al., 2014). However, such approaches do not explicitly talk about disabled children and their experiences of creativity. Research led by Davis (2011, 2013) revealed the importance of people’s diversities within tolerant environments for the flourishing of their creativity, but the participants in this research were young people and adults. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature related to how disability, as an axis of children’s identities, contributes to children’s daily experiences of creativity in schools,

and to how research on creativity can be influenced by the field of disability studies in order to create more inclusive environments.

2.3.3.5 Age and embodiment

Age has also been regarded as an aspect of people's identities (James and James, 2012). In the Western context, age has mainly been linked to 'time passing' (James et al., 1998:60) and is calculated in numerical terms (James and James, 2012). It has been mentioned that viewing age as a chronologised and numerical notion affects our understanding of how lives are lived differently according to people's inclusion in different age groups (James, 2005). For example, children's experiences are often limited and shaped differently than adults' experiences, since children are denied access to adult spaces and realities (James, 2005).

However, age was not always regarded as a significant aspect of people's lives (James and James, 2012). Current concepts of age that focus on age-based schemata and pay particular attention to stages of children's development are rooted in positivist, biological and psychological sciences (Alderson, 2013). For example, child psychologists from the field of developmental psychology 'observe, test, classify and measure' children's development according to the so-called universal stages of development (Alderson, 2013:26). Therefore, positivist research of this kind fits into the concept of measurable and 'normal' development (Alderson, 2013:26), which rests in turn on the idea of 'a common developmental and *age-based* path for *all* children' (James, 2005:250).

Viewing age merely in numerical terms and through categories of developmental psychology has been highly problematised and critiqued (James, 2005, James et al., 1998). In other words, researchers are referring to this approach as the 'institutionalisation of numerical age' (Hockey and James, 2002), meaning that age is embedded in rigid structures that organise children's lives within age-based schemata (James and James, 2012). Therefore, children of different ages are categorised in different groups and put in different spaces. As described by James et al. (1998:72),

'Children enter the world of the school and they progress with their same-age peers through a fixed series of educational stages linked to an established, spatial hierarchy of classes'.

This implies that different age groups study different curricula and carry different duties in terms of attainment, skills and responsibilities (James et al., 1998, James and James, 2012). However, not all children manage to fulfil the expectations set for their age group and this creates significant challenges for them (James and James, 2012). These children are often described in terms such as ‘abnormal’, ‘backward’ or ‘developmentally delayed’ (James, 2005:250).

Recent studies conceptualise age as a fluid notion (Hockey and James, 2002) and move away from ideas of a ‘fixed and repetitive sequence of ages and stages within human life and experience’ (Hockey and James, 2002:5). It is also argued that age should be seen as intersecting with other aspects of children’s identities and that, within an intersectional framework, age is not only about time passing, but is a situated and context-specific experience (James, 2005:250). Therefore, it has been highlighted that children’s experiences of age are not homogeneous and that more attention should be paid to children’s individual and subjective experiences of age (James, 2005).

Age has also been viewed as an embodied process (Hockey and James, 2002). For example, Hockey and James (2002:9) examined how this ‘bodily condition of life is – or is not – managed and negotiated by individuals in different ways’. Initial conceptualisations of age as embodied process paid particular attention to the bodies of children and adults and stressed their distinct character; in particular, embodiment primarily had to do with biological maturity and children’s inability to obtain control over the body and its functions (James et al., 1998). James (1993) mentioned that creating the category of the ‘child’ as distinct from the category of the ‘adult’ on the basis of their bodily differences is a characteristic of Western cultures and influences how children shape their social identities.

In contrast, social studies of childhood were developed within a social constructionist framework that created an alternative to biological reductionism (Prout, 1996, 2000). Social constructionism critiqued conceptualisations of age as ‘natural’ and ‘biologically given’ (Hockey and James, 2002:54), but did not value the importance of the material dimension of the body (Prout, 1996, Prout, 2000). Therefore, there have been calls for researchers to take different routes, acknowledging both the social and the biological and

material bodily dimensions. As James et al. (1998:166) observe, the proportion contributed by biology and society is not ‘reducible to either – any more than a cake can be “unbaked” to prove that it is really more flour than eggs’. In the same vein, Hockey and James (2002) propose a way forward to the study of age and embodiment that would overcome the binaries of the social and biological and would thus avoid the reductionism that results from ignoring either the social or the material aspect of the ageing body. As they affirm, the construction of children’s identities is achieved and experienced not only through biological processes, but also via embodied interactions among individuals (Hockey and James, 2002).

Prout (2000) argued that bodies are both material and representational entities. As he stated, children’s bodies ‘are inseparable from, produced in, represented by and performed through their connections with other material objects’ (Prout, 2000:2). Following on from this, Prout (1996:27) stated that

‘childhoods, like all social relations, are constructed not only from human minds and their interactions, not only from human bodies and their interactions, but through an unending mutually constituting interaction of a vast array of material and non-material resources’.

It has also been suggested that there is a need to explore how children’s bodies ‘are experienced, constructed and shifted by the interpretations and translations of adults, children, nature and technology’ (James et al., 1998:168), and in addition to explore ‘how children themselves experience their bodies’ (James et al., 1998:154).

The aforementioned discussion on age and embodiment raised a question for this study: namely, whether and, if so, how age matters in shaping children’s experiences of creativity and how children embody creativity.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I explored relevant literature in the field and provided a review of the underlying concepts that form the contextual and conceptual framework of this research. First of all, I have reviewed relevant literature on definitions of creativity over the years and through different disciplines, and have provided an outline of the common

characteristics of these definitions that are used in policy and practice literature. I have also explored issues of agency and performativity. In relation to agency, I have problematised discourses that view agency as a solely individual act and highlighted views of agency that pay attention to the interdependencies among people (in keeping with Burkitt, 2016, Moosa-Mitha, 2005, Konstantoni, 2012); with respect to performativity, I have provided an image of what schools look like when they focus excessively on ‘quality’, and have linked this to the research question posed by this study regarding the structural barriers to childhood creativity in schools. I have also provided an overview of how the Curriculum for Excellence and other Scottish policy documents frame creativity; raised a question about how the Curriculum for Excellence is interpreted and implemented; and considered how this interpretation affects childhood creativity. In this chapter, I have also highlighted different definitions of collaborative creativity (producing novel ideas in groups, acknowledging the importance of the social in boosting creativity, promoting co-creation in partnerships among academics, teachers, artists and students) and identified gaps in specific approaches (such as lack of research that pays attention to the diversities of the learners, and lack of research that promotes children’s own perspectives). I have also suggested that the influence of power relations among children has been neglected by the literature on collaborative creativity; therefore, the final sections of this chapter explore the issue of power in more detail and pay specific attention to whether research suggests that aspects of children’s intersectional identities influence the way power operates among children.

Based on the literature review I have identified gaps throughout this chapter in relation to research that:

- uses participatory approaches that listen to and promote children’s voices (Davies et al., 2013)
- explores the effectiveness of creative approaches and the diversity of the learners (Davies et al., 2013)
- focuses on collaborative creativity and on the power dynamics and complexities within peer-group interactions
- pays attention to the nature of adult engagement with learners in nurturing creativity (Craft, 2005:xxiv)

- explores how creativity is perceived and implemented within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence

Based on the gaps identified in the literature, it is the aim of this study to explore children's and teacher's perspectives on creativity within one primary school classroom in Scotland, examining the ways creativity is perceived and can be fostered in this classroom.

The pursuit of the above aim was shaped and guided by the following specific research questions:

- **Research Question 1:** What are children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom?
- **Research Question 2:** How is children's creativity experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom?
- **Research Question 3:** What are the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity?
- **Research Question 4:** How is the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice, implemented in practice?
- **Research Question 5a:** What cultural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?
- **Research Question 5b:** What structural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?

The following chapter discusses the methodological approach that was adopted in this study in order to explore and answer the above research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology and research methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach and research methods adopted in this study. It starts by outlining the epistemological and ontological framework that shaped and influenced the study. It examines epistemology, which is about theories of knowledge (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002), justifying the decision to follow an interpretive approach. Then, it examines ontology as the study of being (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002) and explains the decision to adopt a postmodern and post-structural approach (section 3.2). The next section (section 3.3.1) describes the research design followed by this research, it mentions the rationale for adopting an ethnographic approach, it provides an overview of doing ethnographic research with children (section 3.3.2), and it describes the methods employed for this research (section 3.3.3). More specifically, the use of an ethnographic approach was used mainly in order to produce thick descriptions of the field (Geertz, 1973) through actively participating in people's daily lives in the field (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Section 3.3.2, entitled 'Doing ethnographic research with children: children's rights and participation' includes key theoretical debates on children's participation in research and mentions some methodological choices available when doing childhood research (James et al., 1998, Davis, 2000, Punch, 2002b, Christensen, 2004, Gallagher, 2009a, Tisdall et al., 2009). Additionally, section 3.3.3 on fieldwork explores aspects of the space and the context in which this research was conducted, as well as a description of how data were generated through participant observation and interviews with children and staff. The methodology and research methods that were adopted for this research were chosen as the most appropriate for addressing and exploring the main aim and the research questions of this study, which are presented below.

The main aim of the present study is to explore children's and teachers' perspectives on creativity within one Primary School classroom in Scotland, exploring how creativity is implemented and can be implemented, in this classroom. This aim is developed under the following research questions:

- 1) What are children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom?

- 2) How is children's creativity experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom?
- 3) What are the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity?
- 4) How is the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice, implemented in practice?
- 5a) What cultural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?
- 5b) What structural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?

3.2 Epistemology and ontology

3.2.1 Epistemology: Why choose an interpretive approach

This study is framed by an interpretive epistemological framework. It has been argued that 'interpretation is an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study' (Carman, 2003:153). In this epistemological framework, which is value-laden, researchers use their own preconceptions and try to make the meaning clear to the reader (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005a, Gadamer et al., 1975).

Interpretivists share the view that the task of the researcher is to understand and interpret the meaning of discourse, as if 'individuals can develop coherent and continuous meanings of the world' (Hughes, 2010:50). The perception of meaning that is proposed in interpretivist theories (as coherent, continuous and ready to be interpreted), contrasts with postmodern and post-structural theories, which emphasise the incoherence and discontinuity of individuals, the dynamic and unstable character of relationships and the multiplicity and instability of meanings (Hughes, 2010). More specifically, in his lecture entitled 'The Order of Discourse', Foucault (1981) presented discourse as a 'disordered buzzing' (p.66), and argued that 'we must not resolve discourse into a play of pre-existing significations' (p.67) and that 'the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge' (p.67). Therefore, according to Foucault (1981), researchers need to focus on analysing the external conditions of possibility of a discourse, instead of interpreting the interior meanings present within a discourse. Ultimately, Foucault (1981) suggests throwing 'off the sovereignty' (p.66) / 'monarchy' (p.73) of the signifier, and rejecting the idea of revealing the 'universality' and 'continuous generosity of meaning' (p.73). Thus, postmodern and post-structural theories take a different route than interpretive theories,

viewing meanings as unsteady and unfixed, and linking them to the individual's social and material circumstances (Hughes, 2010). This study acknowledges this conflict between interpretivism and postmodern and post-structural theories, and uses both approaches in an attempt to create dialogue between them and enable them to inform one another.

More specifically, the use of an interpretive approach in this study proceeds as follows. Emphasis has been given to framing children's and teachers' understandings of creativity (Hughes, 2010), and also on paying attention to the 'webs of interaction' between children and children, or teachers and children (Edwards, 2001:155). Postmodern and post-structural theories influenced these processes by emphasising the multiplicity and instability of understandings and meanings, and also by focusing on the very dynamic character of interactions among individuals (Hughes, 2010). The use of an interpretive framework also helped me to stress the 'the intimate relationship between the researcher' and what is studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005b:10). Furthermore, this research paid attention to the plethora of people's meanings, values and cultural contexts (Schrage, 1992), recognising the 'rich and unpredictable' character of human nature (Schrage, 1992:5), which also indicates the use of an interpretive approach, as well as of a postmodern, post-structural approach.

These assumptions could not be examined using a value-free quantitative framework (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005a). In particular, this study was not interested in capturing the observable and verifiable phenomena of the reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005a, Gillham, 2000), a method that does not pay attention to subjective phenomena (Gillham, 2000). Also, the emphasis on experimental methods (Gillham, 2000) and the production of outcomes that are value-neutral and produce testable, generalisable models (Comstock, 1982) was not the focus of this research.

The interpretivist epistemological framework of this study should be viewed in the light of postmodern and post-structural ontology, as described below.

3.2.2 Ontology: postmodern and post-structural influences

This study is influenced by postmodern and post-structural ontological perspectives. In the following section I present some arguments that support and, also, criticise

postmodernism and post-structuralism. Additionally, I provide an explanation of my decision to use these ontological perspectives by explaining how they were adopted for this study.

Postmodernism has been developed in opposition to modernism (Robson, 2011). Modernism has its roots in the Enlightenment, which flourished in Europe mainly from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002, Robson, 2011). Modernism's key points are founded on arguments about 'rationality and progress through science' (Robson, 2011:16), the need to 'seek for general truths' (Robson, 2011:16), and the prevalence of a rational, authoritarian approach by teachers towards pupils (Pring, 2004). Such assumptions support the 'superiority of the West' and 'the idea of science as Truth' and are perceived as '*foundationalist* in the sense that they argue for the rational, independent subject as the ground of both *ontology* (being) and *epistemology* (theories of knowledge)' (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002:2, original emphasis).

Postmodernism and post-structuralism question the aforementioned premises, viewing the world and the individuals in it as 'incoherent and discontinuous' (Hughes, 2010:50). Post-structuralism denies the view that subjects are 'the autonomous creators of themselves or their social worlds', maintaining instead that 'subjects are embedded in a complex network of social relations' and are 'constituted in and through specific socio-political arrangements' (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002:3). In this context, post-structuralists 'seek to understand the dynamics of relationships between knowledge/meaning, power and identity' (Hughes, 2010:51). Those arguments are very important for this study, in regard to my adult role in the field, the relationship between me and the participants, the negotiation of power dynamics (Gordon et al., 2001, Foucault, 1997), and the concept of belonging as a dynamic process that includes social, ethical and political choices (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Postmodernism supports the view that 'the reality we perceive is socially and culturally constructed' (Atkinson, 2003:36). Also, postmodernism recognises the existence of different perspectives (Pring, 2004); it is 'like a prism which refracts multiple images of "reality", reflects complexity, and fractures certainty' (Atkinson, 2003:39). Furthermore, the culturally diverse society in which we live, leads postmodernists to question the dominance of any one view of the world (Pring, 2004). In this research, I will use this

argument by seeking to collect the multiple truths that exist in the social world of one Scottish primary school classroom (Denzin, 1997).

The concept of postmodernism is considered difficult to define (Atkinson, 2003). However, some authors have made an attempt to summarise some of the main characteristics that shape this notion (Atkinson, 2003). Drawing on her previous work (2002), Atkinson (2003:36) explains that some of the key features of postmodernism are:

- ‘The resistance towards certainty and resolution’
- ‘The rejection of fixed notions of reality, knowledge or method’
- ‘The acceptance of complexity, lack of clarity, and multiplicity’
- ‘The acknowledgement of subjectivity, contradiction and irony’
- ‘The refusal to accept boundaries or hierarchies in ways of thinking’.

Some other qualities, mentioned by Corker and Shakespeare (2002:4), can be added to the above list and are quoted below:

- ‘Postmodern approaches acknowledge that it is not possible to tell a single and exclusive story about something that is complex’
- ‘An ontological emphasis on uncertainty, instability, hybridity, contingency, embodiment and reflexivity’
- ‘Altered relations between knowledge and power’.

On the other hand, postmodernism has been criticised. One critique states: ‘Postmodernism has no agenda for social justice; it disempowers those to whom it claims to give a voice’ (Atkinson, 2003:46). This criticism is extended to educational research. Based on Foucault’s (1977) argument that postmodernism and post-structuralism do not focus on change, but seek to understand the world and to raise critical questions, it is suggested that this ontological framework has little relevance to teaching and improvised practice (Atkinson, 2003). This research aims to shed light on this criticism by exploring different perspectives on creativity and raising critical questions about its practical implementation.

As a response to the aforementioned criticism, Atkinson (2003:46) argues that postmodernism is a way of 'rethinking the base that fixed notions of society and justice are founded'. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that some groups of people may feel empowered through the recognition of multiple identities (Atkinson, 2003). Davis (2000), by providing examples of research with disabled people, illustrates the point that this ontological approach 'does not run the risk of weakening feelings of collectivity' as 'it offers us the chance to illustrate different people's concepts of oppression and to gather a variety of definitions of oppression' (Davis, 2000:199). Finally, it is argued that postmodernism 'leads to profound shifts in the way society is perceived' and 'disrupts and reconstructs the apparent neutrality of social policy and practice' (Atkinson, 2003:46).

Another critique of postmodernism perceives this framework as relativist and as 'a theoretical framework in which anything goes' (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002:6). However, it is suggested that this criticism is refuted by 'synthesising notions of agency, culture and structure' (Davis, 2000:199) and also by 'balancing explanations of people's everyday experiences with accounts of how those experiences are linked to wider societal influences' (Davis, 2000:198). It is suggested that researchers can better investigate the 'whole' and pay attention to the wider social context by doing ethnographic research (Prout and James, 1997). So, the next section explores the use of ethnography in this study.

3.3 Research design: a school ethnography

This section explains why ethnography was chosen as the most effective approach for answering the research questions of this study, and provides an overview of basic concepts in doing research with children. It also pays attention to aspects of fieldwork and describes how participant observation was used for generating data within the field, the roles I adopted in the field, and the use of informal conversations and interviews as additional methods of data generation.

3.3.1 Why choose an ethnographic approach?

The present research aims to explore children's and teachers' different perspectives on creativity and its practical implementation in one primary school classroom. In order to pursue this aim, I adopted an ethnographic approach for the following reasons.

Ethnography is composed of the Greek words ‘ethnos’ and ‘grapho’; it means ‘writing about people’ (James, 2007:246). An ethnographic approach involves various methods, such as participant observation and interviews (Konstantoni and Kustatscher, 2016). Mason (2002), using the term data generation instead of data collection, mentions that data can be generated from various sources, such as experiences, understandings, emotions, conversations and interactions.

The researcher doing ethnographic research becomes a member of the community, interacts with people and explores the nature of particular social phenomena through being an insider in the process (Agar, 2008). As Konstantoni and Kustatscher (2016:224) demonstrate, ethnography ‘shares the idea that as researchers we cannot detach ourselves from the worlds we study’. Furthermore, in ethnographic research the researcher needs to spend an extensive amount of time in the field, because ethnographic relations are long-term (Agar, 2008, Creswell, 2007, Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

Ethnography is described as an in-depth, exploratory study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) that produces ‘thick descriptions’ of the field (Geertz, 1973). Although it is stated that ethnography can be described in many ways (Gordon et al., 2001), Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) provide a definition that comprises the above mentioned elements, as follows:

‘Ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal or formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of enquiry’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:3).

It is argued that ethnographic research focuses on a cultural group of people, examining and describing their beliefs, values, behaviours and social life, and tries to define the shared meanings and patterns of a cultural group (Agar, 2008, Creswell, 2007, Mukherji, 2015). So, ‘people’s actions and accounts are studied in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by the researcher’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:3). Drawing on her previous work (Christensen, 1999, Christensen and James, 2000), Christensen (2004:166) argues that an important aspect of conducting ethnographic research with

children is the act of entering into ‘children’s cultures of communication’. In the same vein, it is illustrated that one can have a better understanding of the plethora of children’s voices ‘within the context of the structures which influence and are influenced by what children do and say’ (Davis, 1998:327).

Carrying out ethnographic research also involves some challenges. For example, it is argued that the generalisation of findings of an ethnographic study is questionable (Bell, 2005, Cohen et al., 2007). However, Marcus (1986), maintaining that ethnographic data can be generalisable, underlines that statistical approaches are oversimplified (Marcus, 1986) and mentions that ‘the more interesting and provocative theoretical works now are precisely those that point to practice’ (Marcus, 1986:166). Furthermore, Marcus (1986) explains that one of the strengths of ethnography is its ability to shed light on the system under study and, therefore, to provide a better analysis of structural barriers and pathogenies within the system in comparison with simplified statistical approaches.

All the aforementioned views were taken into account for the present research, and indicated that ethnography was the most suitable research method for answering the research questions of this study. In addition to the previously discussed considerations, ethnographic research involves methods such as participant observations and interviews, as well as other key points which are described in the following sections of this chapter. As this ethnographic research involved children, it is important to explore ethnographic research within the context of childhood studies, which is the main focus of the next section.

3.3.2 Doing ethnographic research with children: children’s rights and participation

Traditional practices in childhood studies saw children as ‘less than fully human, unfinished or incomplete’ (Jenks, 2005:19) and thus did not involve children in the decision-making process of the research (Christensen and James, 2000, Kellett, 2010). In such practices, children were represented by adults, who were responsible for interpreting children’s lives and views (Christensen and James, 2000, Prout and James, 1997). Nowadays, there are approaches that recognise children as human ‘beings’, rather than human ‘becomings’ (Qvortrup, 1994) and children’s rights have been officially recognised

by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). Recent approaches view children as active social agents (James and Prout, 1997, James, 2010) and as rights holders (Farrell et al., 2016, Tisdall, 2012) and recognise the ‘plurality, complexity, multiplicity and the diversities of childhood’ (James, 2010:487-488). Thus, children are seen as subjects and not as objects of research processes (Christensen and James, 2000, James, 2007, Prout and James, 1997). It is also argued that children should be informed about and contribute to the dialogue surrounding important decisions throughout the research practice (Christensen, 2004, Lansdown, 2004, Powell and Smith, 2009).

Following the new tensions found in research within childhood studies, which indicate that researchers should research *for* and *with* children (Gallacher et al., 2008), children’s participation in research has been given considerable attention by many scholars (Davis, 2009, Davis, 1998, Hill et al., 2004, Kellett, 2004, Percy-Smith, 2010, Powell and Smith, 2009, Tisdall and Davis, 2004, Tisdall et al., 2009). As Christensen (2004:167) shows, there is a shift ‘from children’s representation to children’s participation in research’. Children’s participation in research is described by many and diverse definitions (Tisdall, 2016). Key aspects of these definitions promote the encouragement of children’s active involvement in the research practices, with attention paid to valuing children’s voices, views and experiences (Moss et al., 2005, Tisdall and Punch, 2012). Furthermore, children’s participation is associated with children’s rights (Lansdown, 2010) and is viewed as a necessary component of human rights (Tisdall, 2016). Additionally, as Percy-Smith and Malone (2001, cited in Malone and Hartung, 2010) argue, ‘authentic participation involves inclusion – wherein the system changes to accommodate the participation and values of children – rather than integration wherein children participate in predefined ways in predefined structures’. Researchers have used various approaches to encourage children’s participation, some arguing that children can be engaged as researchers themselves (Gallacher et al., 2008, Tisdall et al., 2009). For example, Kellett (2010) carried out child-led research in which children were involved in the stages of designing and carrying out research and disseminating the findings.

On the other hand, participatory approaches have been discussed critically by researchers. For example, Gallagher (2009c) points out the danger for children in being seen as powerless while adults as power-holders share some power with them through

participatory approaches. By criticising arguments that view participation as driven by power, Gallagher (2009c) prompts us to view power from a Foucauldian perspective as a dynamic, productive, ambivalent notion, and also to pay attention to the power dynamics between children themselves. Furthermore, as Tisdall (2012:187) highlights in a similar vein, ‘there is a risk that children are treated as a homogeneous group, with a too-simplified dichotomy of childhood versus adulthood’, which does not prompt us to take into account the diversities of childhood. Other criticisms involve concerns such as the possibility that children may not want to participate actively (Tisdall and Punch, 2012), or that they may choose more silent ways of being involved, which are viewed as alternatives to participation by the children (Gallagher et al., 2008). Finally, it is argued that there is a danger of uncritical use of participatory methods which claim to be emancipatory, but which in reality promote adults’ ideas, agendas and strategies (Gallagher et al., 2008, Kim, 2016).

The aforementioned debates raise the following question for this research: How can we create a research context wherein children can choose the level at which and the way in which they want to participate in research processes?

A variety of solutions has been proposed to address this question, such as the use of participatory research techniques (Tisdall et al., 2009), the use of the Mosaic approach (Clark, 2005), the provision of space where the children can interact and be involved in the research process (Davis, 1998), as well as the opportunity for them to criticise stages of the research (Davis, 2000). All these different approaches, together with the researcher’s choice reflect how they perceive childhood (Punch, 2002b) and are driven by the ontological (What is a child?) and epistemological (What can we know about children and childhood?) viewpoints that the research follows (Gallagher, 2009a).

As described in the following sections and in sections of the next chapter, in this research the children had the space to participate actively by choosing how they wanted to communicate their messages to me during the interviews, by having their own interpretations of the opt-in/opt-out process, and by forming their critique of my research findings during the dissemination process.

3.3.3 Fieldwork

This section explores my rationale on the choice of the school, describes the sampling method and presents the timescale that was followed during the fieldwork.

The fieldwork was conducted in Little Valley Primary School (a pseudonym). The school is located in a suburb of a Scottish city. Little Valley Primary School was chosen in accordance with meeting the broad criteria I set, which concerned conducting my research in a primary school: a) that implemented the Curriculum for Excellence; b) where there was a broad interest in creativity; c) where I would be able to stay for an extended amount of time; and d) that would give me the chance (desirable but not necessary) to involve children from the upper levels of primary school in my research. The Curriculum for Excellence – which has influenced the content of my research questions – is implemented in every primary school in Scotland, so there was no need for me to identify a specific type of school. It is also necessary to mention that the school I chose had specified ‘creativity’ as part of the school ethos, and this was one of the main reasons which led me to choose that particular school setting. Additionally, ethnography was the most suitable research method for answering the research questions of this study, and employing an ethnographic approach would require my attendance in the school for an extended amount of time (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, the teacher’s willingness to provide me prolonged access to her classroom, further reinforced my decision to conduct research in this school.

Ethnographic studies generally focus on ‘one or a small number’ of settings to ensure that the research has sufficient depth (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 31), and this focus on pursuing depth justifies why my research has only explored children’s perspectives on creativity within one classroom. However, in contrast with most ethnographic studies, I do not provide a comprehensive contextual description of the school and of the classroom, nor a list of the children’s characteristics. Firstly, this decision was made for reasons of confidentiality, since providing a detailed description of the school and of children’s characteristics could risk compromising anonymity. Additionally, gathering children’s demographic data would be challenging, as a result of the school’s strict policy on sharing such information. However, during the fieldwork, I collected information on school and

classroom spaces, as well as about the children's characteristics. This information has been included as part of most of the data excerpts and within the analysis sections of this thesis.

I conducted my research in one primary school classroom. The rationale behind this choice was that I wanted to focus on the culture of the classroom as an insider in the field (Marcus, 1986). To do so, I needed to build rapport with the children and the teacher so that they would feel comfortable about sharing their thoughts with me (Konstantoni, 2011). It was the school's head-teacher and one of the school's principal teachers (Juliet) who suggested that I conduct my research in a P7 classroom. Choosing P7 also matched my expectations; since most research in the field of creativity focuses either on early childhood (e.g. Cremin et al., 2015; Craft, 2002, 2003a) or on older ages (secondary education) (e.g., Chappell and Craft, 2011), the study of creativity that involves children at the upper level of primary school has been neglected. This P7 classroom contained 28 pupils in total. The main class teacher was Juliet, with another teacher, Mrs. Ahmed, teaching some parts of the Curriculum (all the names are pseudonyms). The school employed a number of educational staff and I also had brief chats with a few of them. In this research I have included data from the members of staff who were in regular contact with the children and myself. I had permission from the head teacher and the teacher for all the children to participate in my research. I also had permission from parents for all except two of the children; also, two children did not want to take part in my research. So, the basic sample for this study was 25 children and two teachers.

The fieldwork lasted from the 23rd of February 2015 until the 23rd of June, 2015. As for the frequency of my visits, until the end of March I was visiting the school 3 times per week and for 3 hours per day, in order to give time to myself and time to the children to adjust to my presence. From April to June I was visiting the school 3-4 times per week and for 3-6 hours per day. During the last month of my fieldwork, I did not decrease the frequency of my attendance as other researchers do (Gallagher, 2004, Kustatscher, 2015). This was because during this month I was doing participant observations and was also conducting individual interviews with children and teachers. My initial idea was to stay in the school for a longer period of time, but this was not possible due to circumstances. Before my entrance into the field I had to submit my first year progression board paper, which I did at the end of January 2015. The school year ended on the 26th of June, 2015 and this had to be the end date for my fieldwork. Also, the children were in P7 so that after

the end of the school year they would move to different secondary schools, which meant that I could not follow them any longer. However, by making frequent visits to the school and by conducting both participant observation and interviews, I felt that I had enough time to develop rapport with the children and generate data that answered my research questions.

The data generation process for this study involved participant observation and interviews with 25 children and two teachers, procedures which are described in the following sections.

3.3.3.1 The research involved participant observations

Participant observations and informal conversations are commonly used as data generation methods in ethnographic research (Creswell, 2007, Mason, 2002), including research with children (James, 2007). The researcher becomes a part of the research setting, ‘experiencing and observing at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting’ (Mason, 2002:84). The researcher generates data by watching people, by listening to what they say and by asking them questions (Gillham, 2000). It is described as follows:

‘Participant observation – establishing a place in some natural setting on a relatively long-term basis in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur in the setting – comprising a core activity in ethnographic fieldwork’ (Emerson et al., 2001:352).

It is also argued that participant observation is very important for ‘getting to know the children, developing rapport and reducing power dynamics’ (Konstantoni, 2011:90). Additionally, it is suggested that participant observation may be a way of making the ‘relative powerlessness of children less visible and obvious’ (James, 2007:255).

In this research the use of participant observations helped me to generate data from informal chats between the teacher and the children, between myself and the children, and also between children themselves (Alderson and Morrow, 2011, Gillham, 2000). The data generation also involved data from interactions (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006) that took place in various school spaces, such as the school classroom, the lobby area outside the classroom, the project room, the corridors, the science room, the playground, the gym hall, and the park near the school. Furthermore, part of the data generation involved my

‘personal experiences and reactions’ (Emerson et al., 2001:353). These data were captured in the field-notes that I kept on a daily basis (see section 4.4.1 for an analytical discussion of keeping field-notes).

During the participant observation I had to make choices as to what my adult role would be and which roles, in general, I would adopt within the field. An explanation of my choices and locations is provided in the following section.

3.3.3.2 My roles in the field

The choice of the researcher’s role is mentioned as one of the biggest challenges in doing research with children (Morrow and Richards, 1996). Researchers have recommended taking on a variety of different adult roles. For example, Mandell (1988 citing Fine, 1987) mentions that researchers could adopt a distant role in which the researcher is not a participant observer. This stance is mainly chosen by researchers who view adults and children as two distinct groups, with adults being more mature intellectually, culturally and socially (Mandell, 1988). Fine and Sandstrom (1988) divide the non-participant adult role into the categories of the authoritarian ‘supervisor’ and the ‘leader’, who possesses an authoritarian role, but also encourages interactions with the participants. Other researchers adopt a least-adult role (Mandell, 1988). It is argued that the least-adult role allows researchers to actively interact with children’s cultures and to engage with children (Cocks, 2006, Holt, 2004) and is believed to lead to a better understanding of children’s views (Holt, 2004). Other scholars suggest adopting the role of participant observer, who is viewed by the children either as an adult (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988) or as a friend (Corsaro, 2003, Fine and Sandstrom, 1988).

Recognising the need to be reflexive about the choice of adult role, Davis et al. (2000) suggest that researchers may adopt multiple and shifting roles, which allow them to reflect on the power dynamics present and, through that process, to attempt to empower the children-participants. This provides more flexibility to the researcher, who can be friend/mediator/entertainer, and authoritarian/non-authoritarian/helper (Davis et al., 2000). This approach has also been used by other researchers. For example, Gallagher (2004) described his roles as including the role of participant observer, of least-adult, of adult-sized child, but also of part-time classroom assistant. My choice of adult role in this study was influenced by the aforementioned arguments (on flexibility and reflexivity), but also

by my relationship with the children and the roles they assigned to me. So, I adopted a flexible, reflexive adult role and also the role of a learner (Davis, 2009). In line with Punch (2001), I provided space for children – where possible – to choose the role they wanted me to play, as described below.

On the first day of my entrance to the classroom, the teacher introduced me as ‘Krystallia’, as I had asked her to do in our discussion before the beginning of the data generation process. All the members of staff in the school were called Miss /Mrs. /Mr. followed by their names or surnames. When I first met the children I introduced myself as a learner. More specifically, I told them that I was a researcher who would join the class until the end of the school year and that I was very keen to learn from them. I also mentioned my Greek identity, saying that I was also keen to learn what the Scottish educational system looks like. During my presence in the field I adopted various roles. I was usually moving around the classroom or other school spaces (project room, corridor, lobby, playground, secret garden...) to speak to different children. Sometimes children asked me to help by filming them while they were acting, to help them with using the computer or with solving mathematical problems. So, in such cases, I was a helper. At other times children shared their secrets with me (for example, Ewan² shared one of his top-secret projects with me) or asked me to follow them in order to show me something. In these cases I had the feeling of being a friend (Davis et al., 2000, Fine and Sandstrom, 1988).

When children were rehearsing for their show, I adopted the role of non-participant observer (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988). As such, I sat in the rehearsal space without having formal authority, but just observed the process (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988). Since children were learning dance moves or practising their acting parts, I could not have participated any more during this process. During this time I did not feel very comfortable and this was also reflected in my field notes, which contained many silences and included short pieces of text. The non-participant role was the most awkward component of my adult role in the field, as I could not get feedback from the participants concerning my presence in the space.

My adult role was also influenced by the teacher’s attitude and her expectations of me. First of all, the two teachers approached me in different ways. Juliet never asked my help and rarely talked to me during the lesson. By contrast, Mrs. Ahmed regularly asked my

help in distributing materials to the children and she talked to me during the lesson. For example, she asked me if I noticed incidents that took place in the classroom, such as examples of children's behaviour. Also, she involved me in the dialogue between herself and the children. When Mrs. Ahmed was teaching I understood that she drew a clear distinction between myself and the children. For example, one day she asked me to cut and distribute pieces of plastic to children so that they could be used for an experiment. On that day, I wrote in my field-notes:

I was happy to do that. I was happy to help either the children or the teachers, as this was also a way for me to pay off for their help to my research. However, each attempt from someone to put me in a more responsible and authoritarian position made me feel uncomfortable and confused.
[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 29 April 2015]

Although I was trying to help Mrs. Ahmed, I did not adopt an authoritarian role, since I was viewing children as 'fellow human beings' and made every attempt to avoid being viewed as an authoritarian person (Christensen, 2004:165). For example, during the fieldwork, I did help out Mrs. Ahmed when she asked me, but I tried to present this as part of my flexible role. Therefore, any attempt from me to help out was part of my role as helper and did not involve disciplining children in any way (Holt, 2004).

On the other hand, when Juliet was teaching the class I never felt that she treated me differently from the children. This made me feel more comfortable in relation to the children. There were also moments when I felt confused about what was expected of me, as in the example below:

Isa and Ava were talking to me, when Alice joined us. Alice wanted to see Isa's and Ava's photos from when they were little. Isa was shy and she didn't want to show her pictures to Alice. The two girls started laughing and chatting loudly about that and they caught Juliet's (the teacher's) attention. Juliet told them that it is OK for them to talk to me, but they should do that trying not to interrupt others. She also reminded them that they should not leave their tasks behind. After this consultation to the children, the teacher left. I felt confused, because I didn't know if the teacher expected from me to consult the children about their behaviour, but I also felt guilty for distracting the children.
[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 30 April 2015]

There were also moments when I was confused about where to position myself, as on the following occasion:

Mrs. Ahmed was trying to discipline some children. (...) I was feeling very uncomfortable during those moments. I avoided looking at the children or the teacher and I remained silent. I was trying not to position myself and reveal my feelings.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 28 April 2015]

It was unclear to me how the teacher and the children perceived my role during this incident. Did they view me as an adult who agreed with the teacher's punitive approach towards the children or did they view me as a non-authoritarian person? From my perspective, I felt closer to the children's position because of sitting in groups with them and I thought that, possibly, my presence might be distracting them. In general, when something similar to this example occurred I avoided judging or showing my feelings (Mandell, 1988).

My adult role in the field was also influenced by my identity. Reinharz (1997) argues that the researchers bring a variety of selves to the field. By interacting with the participants within a particular setting, those selves are, then, being co-constructed and transformed (Reinharz, 1997). During my presence in the field I felt that my ethnic identity as a Greek person overlapped with my identity as a researcher and all the other selves that I brought to the field – in the way children seemed to perceive me and connect with me through dialogue. For example, many of the questions children asked me were not linked to my research, but to what the Greek educational system looks like and what children's experiences in it are. Therefore, my ethnic identity had an impact on the way children perceived me and, thus, on my adult role in the field. Corsaro and Molinari (2000) mention the case of 'Bill' – a non-Italian person, who entered an Italian school. According to their description, Bill's foreignness was 'central to his participant status', as he was perceived by the children as an 'incompetent adult', due to his lack of competency in the Italian language and his limited knowledge of the workings of the school (Corsaro and Molinari, 2000:180). This example also has similarities with my experience in the field. The children were aware of our cultural and linguistic differences and this led them to often act as my teachers by teaching me how to speak Scottish or by explaining to me how their Scottish school is structured. An example is given below:

Rory: Oh, Isa, you wrote your name in Greek!
 Isa: Yes!
 Rory: Krystallia, do you want to learn some Scottish? We can teach you to speak Scottish!
 Krystallia: This would be awesome!
 Isa: Rory and Ewan² are the only two children in the classroom that speak Scottish. (*Many children have a Scottish accent as far as I can understand, but Rory and Ewan² also use a lot of Scots words, such as 'aye'*).
 Krystallia: Do you prefer to speak Scottish?
 Ava: I hate Scottish!
 Isa: I also prefer to speak English.
 Isa grabbed my pen in order to write some Scottish phrases in my notebook.
 Isa: OK, let's see. 'I don't know' is like that in Scottish.
 She wrote: 'I don't know = I Dinny Ken.' (*I keep the original children's spelling*)
 'See you tomorrow = See you the Morn.'
 Isa: What else would you write, Rory?
 Rory: 'Nut', 'Aye', 'Greeting'.
 So, Isa wrote down:
 'No = Nut'.
 'Yes = I'. (*she wrote I instead of Aye*)
 'Crying = Gruting'.
 Isa: Oh, you can also say you are dafty, instead of saying you are an idiot.
 So, she wrote down: 'Idiot = Dafty'.
 [Excerpt from fieldnotes, 23 April 2015]

In the aforementioned example some children indicated their preference for using English instead of Scottish. This is linked to literature about English being treated as superior and as a more powerful and dominant language (Robinson and Jones-Diaz, 2006). However, children asked me to teach them some Greek words and phrases, which they enjoyed very much.

My ethnic identity (which seemed to decrease my authority, as described above) was also linked to my role as a teacher when I was in Greece. Some of my thoughts are described below:

When children ask me about Greek schools and Greek teachers I sometimes feel uncomfortable. I don't want them to view me as a teacher, or as a person who was a teacher in the past, because I don't want to carry a role that is often linked to having authority. I prefer them to view me as a person who is in their classroom in order to learn from and with them.
 [Excerpt from fieldnotes, 30 April 2015]

However, children did not seem to perceive me as an authoritarian person; instead, my Greek ethnicity as well as my role as a former Primary School teacher roused their curiosity. So, they often approached me, asking questions about schools in Greece, disciplinary mechanisms and adults' power over children. Listening to their questions about Greek schools was also a valuable learning experience for me, because I could gain insights into what subjects matter to them the most.

3.3.3.3 Informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with children and staff

Informal conversations with children and staff members were conducted, to enable me to obtain a better understanding of the participant observations (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Informal conversations/chats are described as ethnographic interviews that 'constitute a site of meaning construction that emerges out of the immediate interaction, but also out of the ongoing relationship, between interviewer and interviewee' (Sherman Heyl, 2001:379). The meaning construction, which differentiates ethnographic interviewing from other forms of interviewing, evolves through the rapport and mutual respect arising from the long-term relationship between the researcher and the participants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, Sherman Heyl, 2001). It is also argued that building rapport with the participants helps the researcher to obtain a better understanding of the participants' perspectives (Fontana and Frey, 2005, Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

All the aforementioned factors were taken into account in this research. Informal conversations took place every day between myself and the participants and this was an intrinsic and very important part of the participant observation, helping me to gain a good understanding of the field. The content of the informal conversations included explanations from the teachers and the children on the Scottish educational context, elaboration on activities, and also feelings and thoughts that the participants wanted to share with me during my presence in the field. All those data were captured in my fieldnotes.

In addition to participant observation and informal conversations with children and teachers, the data generation process involved qualitative data from one round of semi-structured interviews. By the end of my four months' fieldwork, I had interviewed twenty children and two teachers. Although the majority of the interviews were conducted

individually, three of them were conducted in pairs. The purpose of the interviews was to explore children's and teachers' perspectives on creativity. Through the participant observation and the informal interviews I obtained a good understanding of the culture of this group of people, of the interactions, relationships, habits and views of the participants. However, conducting individual interviews in addition to these methods helped me to acquire a better grasp of the field. As Davidson (2012:110) suggests, 'by combining approaches, it is possible to see first-hand how the different elements of young people's social worlds connect'. It is also argued that including interviews in the research will provide a better understanding of the participants' views (Folque, 2010) and that semi-structured interviews provide 'rich and detailed data' (Gallagher, 2009a:75). The next sections explore the use of semi-structured interviews with children and staff.

3.3.3.3.1 Interviews with children

For this study I adopted a semi-structured approach, which allowed me to conduct the interviews in the form of a discussion with personal, face-to-face contact. Semi-structured interviews enabled me to create a flexible interview process (Bryman, 2004, Mukherji, 2015). This means that although I had a list of questions with themes I wanted to pay attention to, those questions did not necessarily follow a specific order (Bryman, 2004) and could be adapted according to the circumstances (Mukherji, 2015). It is argued that this type of interview makes the interviewee feel that they are taking part in a 'conversation with purpose, but this should not mean that detailed and rigorous planning needs to happen' (Mason, 2002:67). While planning the structure for the interviews, I identified some key issues that I wanted to investigate (Gillham, 2000). Those key issues arose from the research questions of this study and also from questions that I formed during my presence in the field. I tried to create 'brief and simple' questions (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:134) and also to use open-ended questions, such as *What is creativity for you* or *What is the most creative thing that could have happened in a school (real or imaginary)*. The children and the teacher used the word 'creativity' in the classroom, so I felt comfortable about using it, too. As I realised during my field-work, creativity was not a fixed term; rather, each child expressed his/her own meanings about creativity. The interview process was guided by the key points I wanted to explore, but was also flexible enough to allow changes during the discussion. In addition to the key points, I sometimes provided the children with some specific examples of their actions in the classroom or some activities they had engaged in, asking them to elaborate on these.

My initial plan was to conduct individual interviews with every child who would agree to take part in the process. However, I chose to be flexible and adapt to the needs of some children who asked to be interviewed with another child; in all three cases this was one of their best friends. This practice is supported by literature that suggests interviewing children along with their best friend (Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000), as this enhances their confidence (Mayall, 2000). Initially, Ava told me that she did not want to be interviewed. A bit later, when I approached one of her best friends, Ava asked me if she could join us. On another day, Ava approached me again, saying that she had more things to share with me and would like to be interviewed again. Alice was listening to us and proposed that Ava be interviewed at the same time as her. I accepted both proposals, firstly because I saw how keen those children were to share things with me and secondly because in each case this was the choice of both children. The third peer interview was with Rowan and Sinead. When I approached them about conducting individual discussions they were both very shy and hesitant. So it was my choice to ask them for a peer discussion, which they both accepted excitedly.

Before conducting the interviews, I informed children about the voluntary character of the interview process and about their right to end our discussion at any point. We then had a discussion in the classroom during which more details of the interview process were clarified. The children were also aware that the interviews would be recorded; consent for this was sought from children, parents/caregivers, the teacher and the school. Also, following the suggestion that researchers should conduct the interviews in a 'comfortable, quiet, private space that has positive associations with the children' (Gallagher, 2009a:75), I encouraged children to choose the space that they preferred as the site of our discussion. There is also support for the belief that the children feel more comfortable when interviewed in a space which is familiar to them (Mayall, 2000).

Children's participation is seen as a significant aspect of doing research with children (Graham et al., 2015). Other work in the field of childhood studies has proposed and employed a variety of methods for doing research with children, such as the use of photographs, diaries and drawings (Backett and Alexander, 1991, Barker and Weller, 2003, Punch, 2002a), persona dolls (Konstantoni, 2011), puppets (Cameron, 2005) and so on. However, such studies have been critiqued on the grounds that not all children are

interested in using specific methods to express their meanings (Tisdall, 2016). In an attempt to take account of children's individual choices, I encouraged them to actively contribute to the research process by bringing with them cultural artefacts or other prompts related to our discussion. By this practice I sought to involve children in the research process, by enabling them to decide how they would prefer to communicate their messages to me. This approach also enabled me as a researcher to create a flexible research practice and a space in which children could express their perspectives on what creativity meant to them, without being influenced by my ideas. As children sometimes try to please the interviewer (Mayall, 1994), I tried to make clear to them that there are many different perspectives on creativity, so there is not a right or wrong way of thinking about it. By contrast, if I had chosen to use specific research techniques, such as creative methods of interviewing, children might have associated those methods (e.g. writing, photographs, drawings, etc. ...) with what creativity should be. Thus, creating a more open and flexible interview process enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of children's views, and also promoted the reflective character of the interview process (Davis, 1998). Furthermore, this choice was influenced by the following suggestion:

'Children's researchers can develop understandings of children's lives by utilizing the opportunities provided by the organizational structures and cultural artefacts to be found in children's social worlds, rather than structuring special and specific research opportunities' (Davis et al., 2000:219).

In the context of my research, the design of the interview process encouraged children to use prompts linked to their own collective and individual social worlds. The links that they made were not only practical ones, such as artefacts and the prompts that they brought with them, but also more abstract ones, such as ideas and thoughts; however, all these modes had the common characteristic of being linked to children's experiences and social spheres. An example of negotiation surrounding this process is offered below.

Isa was very happy to be interviewed. We were walking down the stairs, moving towards the sofas – the location that she chose for the interview. She was explaining to me the reasons why most of the children preferred the sofas for our discussion. Then, I asked her if she wanted to bring any activities or other prompts with her.

Isa: What kind of things can I bring?

Krystallia: Anything you feel like it is related to creativity for you. This could be an activity or anything else from the classroom.

Isa: Has anyone else brought anything?

Krystallia: Not yet. They preferred to explain to me. It is not obligatory to bring something; only if you want.

Isa: OK, I will explain to you then. Because I don't want to talk to you about any specific activity, I mostly prefer things that we do outside.

After that, instead of encouraging Isa to go outside and show me what is creative for her, I started recording our discussion that took place indoors.

This fact indicated a lack of flexibility in my adult role.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 03 June 2015]

In the above-mentioned example, although Isa did not actually bring any artefacts with her, she explained the necessary factors in defining something as creative. On other, similar, occasions when children preferred to share their views without bringing any artefacts, creativity was linked to outdoor play, collaboration with younger children and the process of learning together, improvisation of individual work, and so on. On the other hand, children who brought cultural artefacts and prompts with them usually chose to bring projects that they had worked on; they defined creativity by explaining to me the process of pursuing this particular activity, the general context, and their feelings.

During the interview process, I adopted the role of reflective listener and learner (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and children were also encouraged to pose questions to me, following Christensen's (2004) suggestion of shifting the traditional roles in the interview process. This decision strengthened children's active involvement in the research process and also provided me with the opportunity to see what topics interest children and their links to creativity.

This section has reflected on children's participation during the interview process by using excerpts from my fieldnotes. A key aspect that emerged in this section relates to children's broad understanding of the notions of prompts/artefacts, which was not necessarily related to objects, but could also apply to spaces and emotions. The key conclusion of this section is the importance of creating less strict and more flexible research practices that provide the space for children to contribute in ways that they feel comfortable with.

3.3.3.3.2 Interviews with staff

The main purpose of the interviews with staff was to explore their perspectives on creativity in primary education and also to gain a wider picture of the school practices and policies. I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews that would provide me with more

flexibility (Mason, 2002). My initial plan was to interview the head teacher of the school, the main teacher of the classroom (Juliet), and the teacher who taught the class a few hours per week (Mrs. Ahmed). However, I did not manage to interview the head teacher due to her very busy schedule.

Prior to the interviews with the teachers I had created an agenda specifying some key aspects that I wanted to explore, which were mainly related to their perspectives on creativity, how creativity is exercised within the context of Little Valley Primary School, policies and practices on creativity and any possible barriers to the implementation of creativity. The contexts in which the two interviews were conducted differed. I asked both teachers to propose the time and location for the interviews. I first interviewed Mrs. Ahmed during break time in one of the classrooms she was teaching. Although Mrs. Ahmed had agreed to be interviewed and audio-recorded, I did not feel very comfortable during our discussion. I was trying to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and encouraged her to share with me more of her thoughts, which I found very interesting. However, our discussion lasted no more than fifteen minutes and ended when the teacher asked me, 'OK? Is that enough?' The interview with Juliet was different. I met her in the classroom half an hour before the beginning of the day. Although she seemed a bit shy in the beginning, after a few minutes she became very talkative, explaining to me many of her thoughts and providing many examples to elaborate on her views. The atmosphere was much more positive during the interview with Juliet. Our discussion ended when the children entered the room.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the Methodology and the Research Methods that were adopted for this study. Section 3.3.1 explored the research design of this study. First of all, I presented the rationale for choosing an ethnographic approach. My decision to generate data through that approach was influenced by arguments from researchers in the field of childhood studies, who suggest that ethnography is a fundamental methodology for doing research with children (James et al., 1998). Furthermore, I argued that the use of ethnography was particularly helpful by enabling me to become a member of the community (Agar, 2008, Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) and to produce 'thick descriptions' of the field (Geertz, 1973).

Section 3.3.2 shed light on the particularities of doing ethnographic research with children, focusing on children's participation in research. In particular, it presented the move from traditional views that saw children as 'less than fully human, unfinished or incomplete' (Jenks, 2005:19) and excluded them from participating in decision-making practices (Christensen and James, 2000, Prout and James, 1997), to current approaches that see children as subjects and not objects of research processes (Christensen and James, 2000, James, 2007). This section also paid particular attention to recognising the heterogeneity of children's experiences (Tisdall, 2012). The aforementioned arguments influenced this study by encouraging creation of an environment in which children are involved in the decision-making process regarding how and how much each of them would like to participate in the research process.

Section 3.3.3 described practicalities regarding the choice of school, the sampling and the timescale that was followed for this research. It also explained the use of participant observations and informal conversations as part of the data generation process (Creswell, 2007). In more detail, I argued that, during participant observations, data were generated through informal chats, through interactions (Alderson and Morrow, 2011, Hancock and Algozzine, 2006), and through my 'personal experiences and reactions' (Emerson et al., 2001:353). It is also important to highlight that during participant observations I adopted multiple and shifting roles (Davis et al., 2000), including those of a reflexive adult (Davis et al., 2000) and of a learner (Davis, 2009).

I also provided an overview of some complexities regarding my adult role and I explained my thoughts about each particular occasion. Finally, this section explored the use of informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with children and teachers. I adopted a stance that viewed the interview process as developing an ongoing relationship between myself and the participants (Sherman Heyl, 2001), which evolved through the rapport developed over the course of our long-term relationship (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Regarding interviews with children, I conducted one round of semi-structured interviews, the children being informed of their right to opt-in and opt-out at any time; they were also encouraged to choose the space of their preference (Gallagher, 2009a, Mayall, 2000). Furthermore, children were encouraged to bring with them prompts or cultural artefacts that might help them communicate their meanings and experiences to

me. Overall, this interview approach aimed to give children the opportunity to express their thoughts without being influenced by my ideas.

Chapter 4: Ethics, reflexivity, analysis and writing

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the Methodology and the Research Methods that were adopted in this study. It covered questions regarding the research paradigm and the research design that included the rationale behind choosing an ethnographic approach, discussion of children's participation in research, and the practicalities of the fieldwork and the data generation process.

This chapter discusses some additional aspects of doing research. It starts by describing ethical considerations involved in research (section 4.2). First of all, I explain the process of gaining access and informed consent (section 4.2.1) and I describe how confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed (section 4.2.2). Then, I explain why I adopted a critical stance towards validity and reliability and I discuss alternative ways of producing rigorous qualitative research, highlighting the importance of reflexivity (section 4.3). Furthermore, I provide an analytical description of the process of writing fieldnotes and the process of data analysis. Finally, I briefly discuss how the data of this research have been disseminated so far.

4.2 Ethics

Ethical considerations when doing research with children have received much attention from researchers in childhood studies (Christensen and Prout, 2002, Alderson and Morrow, 2011). This research followed the Ethics Framework of Moray House School of Education, a department of the University of Edinburgh, as well as the ERIC ethical guidelines (Graham et al., 2013), an approach that pays particular attention to children's human rights (Graham et al., 2015).

Articles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child were also taken into account. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) consists of 41 articles that promote

and support the rights of children throughout the world. The present research focused on the following articles: 2 (children should not be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, abilities...), 12 (children can express their opinion freely on issues that affect them and this opinion will be taken seriously into account by adults), 13 (children have the right to impart information, but also to be careful in case such information should cause damage to other people), 29 (respect for children's different cultures), and 31 (importance of play and a wide range of activities that children should be provided with).

In this section I outline how this research approached ethical considerations related to gaining access – informed consent and confidentiality-anonymity.

4.2.1 Gaining access and informed consent

In November 2014 I started contacting schools suggested to me by a contact from the University's Education department. After contacting the head teachers of the schools, I had a couple of positive responses and I chose to conduct my research at Little Valley Primary School. The head teacher of Little Valley Primary School seemed to be very interested in my research and suggested that I visit the school to discuss the details with her and with one of the principal teachers of the school. As they were very busy before Christmas, I agreed to meet them in January 2015. I visited the school for the first time in mid-January and, as the head teacher was still busy, I discussed my research with a teacher (Juliet). I explained to her the aim of my research (investigating perspectives on creativity within Scottish primary education), the time period during which I intended to stay in the field (February until the end of the school year), and the frequency of my visits (3-4 days per week for 3-6 hours per day). I also explained that my presence in the field would involve taking notes, having informal discussions and conducting one round of interviews with teachers and children. She mentioned that she is very interested in my topic and that they do a lot of creative things in Little Valley Primary School, as creativity is one of the things that comprise the ethos of this school. She told me that she needed some time to consider it and would contact me in due course. Indeed, the teacher contacted me very soon, proposing a second visit to the school with the school's manager. In my second visit I submitted to the school all the documents needed for my updated PVG scheme and I also had a quick chat with the teacher, who suggested the 23rd of February as my first day in the classroom.

After gaining ethical approval from the University's ethics committee, I negotiated access to the head teacher and the teacher at the school, before negotiating access to all the parents by distributing leaflets and consent forms. Obtaining informed consent is an important part of doing research with children (Fraser, 2004, Gallagher et al., 2010, Lewis and Lindsay, 2000) and is also 'an important tool for ensuring that research participants are respected (Gallagher et al., 2010:478). I followed Gallagher's (2009b:15) definition of informed consent, which specifies that: 'consent involves some explicit act' (in this research it involved a written signature), 'participants can only consent if they are informed about, and understand, something of the nature, purpose and likely consequences of the research', 'consent must be given voluntarily, without coercion', and 'consent must be renegotiable'. During this process, in line with other researchers (Kustatscher, 2015, Konstantoni and Kustatscher, 2016), I became aware of a paradox: namely, that children were the main participants in this research, but the last to be asked to provide their consent. This fact indicates children's unequal and subordinate position (in the sense that it depends on the outcome of the previous decision layers) within the structures of procedural ethics (Gillam and Guillemin, 2004, Heath et al., 2007).

After getting consent from the school's leadership and from the classroom teacher, I designed leaflets and consent forms for parents and children. The leaflets for parents included detailed information about my research project and the way I would gather my data (observations and interviews) (Heath et al., 2007). I also mentioned the significance of my study, the voluntary character of children's participation and the ability to opt-in and opt-out at any time. Before handing out the leaflets and consent forms I submitted copies to the teacher so that she could make suggestions. After a couple of days I met with the teacher and the deputy head teacher to discuss my leaflets and consent forms. They told me that overall they looked good, but they that I remove some information from the consent form (basically information that was also displayed in the leaflets) in order to keep it simple and easy to read. I was fine with that and made these corrections. They also advised me to create an opt-out consent form for the parents, rather than the yes or no form which I had designed. The reason for that, as they explained, was that many parents do not return most of the forms to the school. I told them that I would prefer to initially send them a yes or no form and that, if many parents did not reply, I would then send them an opt-

out form, which was what I finally did, as a few parents did not return the form. Two parents indicated that they would not allow their children to take part in my research.

Then, I showed the teacher the consent forms I had designed for the children and asked her opinion on whether or not they were appropriate for every child. I also asked her whether I should provide any translations or seek consent by other methods (for example, orally) from any child who was not able to provide written consent. The teacher told me that every child would be able to use the consent forms as they were. When I entered the classroom for the first time the teacher introduced me by my first name, saying that I would join the classroom until the end of the school year. Then, we all sat in a circle and discussed who I was and what my research was about. This stage was very important for me, because participants can provide consent only if they are informed about the topic and the methods of the research (David et al., 2001) and, also, about ‘the purpose, the nature and likely consequences of the research’ (Gallagher et al., 2010:471). During my discussion with the children my aim was not to seem didactic, but to create dialogue with them (David et al., 2001). So, I introduced myself as a researcher at Edinburgh University, I mentioned that I come from Greece and that I was really interested in finding out about schools in Scotland; then I talked to them about my particular interest, creativity. I also mentioned that creativity could mean different things to different people and that I wanted to hear everyone’s views on creativity. We discussed the data generation process, the informed consent and the opt-in/opt-out system, emphasising the voluntary character of their participation. I also informed children about confidentiality and anonymity issues. Then, I encouraged them to ask me any questions or to discuss any issues they were concerned with. As no child had any questions at that time, the teacher encouraged children to share things that were clear to them about me and my research. So, we had some discussion of the points that children mentioned. After that, I presented the consent forms to the children and asked them to consider whether or not they wanted to take part in my research. However, I emphasised that completing the consent form would only indicate their initial preference and that they could change their decision at any time. In my next visit to the school I collected all the consent forms. Two children opted out at this stage.

Being influenced by literature that suggests that informed consent needs to be a reflexive, ongoing and renegotiable process (David et al., 2001, Gallagher, 2009a, Hammersley, 2015), and by arguments supporting the idea that researchers should reflect on the power

dynamics in the field (Gallacher et al., 2008, Holt, 2004), I decided to develop a system that would enable children to renegotiate their consent, opting in and out as they chose at any time. Such systems have also been developed by other researchers. For example, Gallagher (2004) used coloured stickers that children could stick on their clothes, indicating whether or not they would like to take part in the research. Although children made much use of the stickers, Gallagher (2004:86) argued that ‘the stickers did not enable children to make an informed decision about whether to participate in the research or not’. Kustatscher (2015) introduced a new, visual system that children could use for renegotiating consent. Using a magnetic board, children could move their pictures to the opt-in and opt-out parts. The use of the magnets enabled children to engage with the process of informed consent and was particularly useful for visualising power dynamics and relationships between children and the researcher while creating space for discussion around such issues. On the other hand, children’s decisions to opt in and out were ‘publicly visible and debated’ (Kustatscher, 2014:692), and this ‘brought some inherent power differences to the fore’ (Kustatscher, 2014:694).

Reading about these techniques, I felt the need to develop a system that would not only promote ongoing consent, but also respect children’s rights to confidentiality in the sense that their decisions to opt in or out would not be based on their friends’ choices or on attempts to manifest to others that they were participating in the research, even if they didn’t want to. For these purposes, I introduced the system of boxes. Boxes have been used for various research purposes, for example, as a supporting tool for obtaining anonymous responses during interviews (Punch, 2002a) and for keeping an account of children’s learning journey (Corner, 2012). In this research, the boxes were used in the context of ethics for ensuring confidentiality during the opt-in/opt-out process, and also as an attempt to enable children to have more power over their decisions, without being affected by their peers’ choices.

During the first day of my visit to the school I introduced the idea of the boxes to the children. I used two plastic boxes of the same size, but of different colours; one empty (pink colour) and one full of small, square papers that included a ‘yes’ and ‘no’ option, as well as a space for the children to write their names in (that box was blue). The idea was that children would grab one piece of paper from the blue box, select the ‘yes’ or ‘no’ option, write down their names and then put this paper in the pink box and, in that way,

inform me of their respective choices without letting anyone else know about them. In my next visit to the school the children informed me of their decision to put the boxes in a space of their own choice in the classroom. This space was in the back-middle of the classroom and was visible from most angles, which allowed me to check the boxes not long after a message was put into the pink box.

The system of the boxes was discussed between me and the participants and everyone agreed that it was an option that children could use for renegotiating consent. Although I regularly reminded the children of this option, I didn't try to make the process obligatory. So, children had flexibility as to how they wanted to inform me about their ongoing consent. During the time I spent in the field, I realised that children had created their own understandings of how to use the boxes. I also became aware of factors that influenced their decisions to opt-in/opt-out of the research. Some examples of these factors are given below.

The idea of using the boxes was not always clear to the children. Sometimes, children were trying to understand why they should use the boxes and for what purposes, as in this example:

Isa: Can I ask you about the boxes?

Krystallia: Of course you can!

Isa: How often do we have to write yes or no? Every day?

Krystallia: Anytime you feel you want to change your option. You don't have to do that, only if you want to.

Isa: Can we also write yes?

Krystallia: I know that you have said yes in the beginning, but if you want to indicate this again, then, you can.

Isa: I am asking that because I want to talk to you. (She tries to find a way to grab my attention 'officially'.)

Krystallia: Then, you can either put a message in the box or talk to me. However you feel like.

Isa: (She didn't write anything, she just started talking to me). We want to help you with your work!

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 30 April 2015]

On a similar occasion, Calum told me that he didn't think it was necessary to have boxes, as the children had already said yes at the beginning, by completing the consent forms [Excerpt from fieldnotes, 27 April 2015], which indicates that ethical procedures and

procedural ethics (Gillam and Guillemin, 2004) are not always helpful and meaningful for the children.

The boxes were also perceived as a method that provided confidentiality and gave the children some degree of choice. On one occasion, Calum mentioned that he liked the boxes, because ‘it is like saying to people help yourself and they can do it if they want and when they want’ [Excerpt from fieldnotes, 30 April 2015]. In a similar vein, Gillean said that she liked the system of the boxes because children could choose what they wanted to do in terms of their participation in research. For some children, the use of the boxes was very important because of the confidentiality it provided. As Laura mentioned, the boxes system ‘was a good idea because it’s not like you have to put your hand up because it was kind of private to you ... no one will notice’ [Interview with Laura, 03 June 2015]. Confidentiality issues were of high importance to more introverted and shy children, but also to children who preferred to express their choices in indirect ways, as described by Dorothy during the interview process:

‘I think it is good because it doesn’t put people on the spot so much as if you ask the whole class of people. Because I know that even though I am very loud, I can be very nervous if I am put on the spot of something (...) it gives us more freedom if we are nervous about doing it, it means we could say no. And we wouldn’t feel guilty about it.’
[Interview with Dorothy, 08 June 2015]

The use of the boxes and of children’s decision to participate in the research was also influenced by children’s emotions and by the number of their daily school tasks. During the interview process, Arisha mentioned that the idea of the boxes was good because it gave people who are not ‘in a mood’ the chance to decide not to take part. She also mentioned the positive impact of the opt-in/opt-out process, arguing that feelings change, so people might need to change their decision on that basis. Furthermore, for some children, taking part in the research was related to school tasks and was a kind of additional task. During our discussion in the classroom, Jonathan observed: ‘I think it is nice (the boxes), because we can say no if we are very busy’. Alastair also mentioned that if he had a day off he would probably use the boxes to say no, which also shows that participation in the research was perceived by some children as another school-related task.

It is possible to conclude from the above that the boxes system respected children's rights to confidentiality and helped them to make decisions about ongoing consent without being influenced by their peers' choices. However, the drawback of this system was that it was designed by me without taking into account the needs of the children and thus was not meaningful for every child. Children's participation in the research process was also encouraged during the interview process, as described in the following section.

Children's consent was sought before and during the interview process. Discussions about the interview process and consent took place both during my presence in the field and a long time before the interview process took place:

Jess: I haven't talked to you today! When are you going to interview us?

Krystallia: In June.

Jess: What are you going to ask us?

Krystallia: We are going to discuss about moments in the Primary school that made you feel creative, about your favourite activities and such things. You can take your activities with you, you can hear the recordings and you can also ask questions to me! (Rowan was next to Jess. When they heard that they can ask questions to me I spotted an enthusiastic expression to both of them.)

Jess: Will we be alone?

Krystallia: I was thinking that maybe it is better to be alone, so that you can express your thoughts freely. What do you think? Do you agree with that?

Jess: Yes! Will you interview us in the classroom or outside?

Krystallia: I thought that somewhere outside would be easier, but you can choose where you want the interviews to happen. Where would you prefer?

Jess: Outside the classroom.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 23 April 2015]

Before starting the interview process I held a discussion with the children and told them that I had a few questions that I would like to hear their thoughts on. I mentioned that they could skip questions, that we could stop our discussion at any point and that, if they wanted, they could also ask questions. I emphasised that this would be a discussion that would be very helpful to me in understanding children's views and might also help children themselves, as their voices would be heard by a wider audience. I encouraged them to bring any cultural artefacts or any prompts from the classroom that might be related to our discussion and I also said that they could choose the space in which they wanted our discussion to take place. Finally, I mentioned the voluntary character of the interview process and that, in order to indicate their preference, they could leave a yes or no message

in the boxes or could inform me orally. None of the children chose to use the boxes, so I started approaching them individually, asking whether or not they would like to be interviewed. Most of the children responded positively, but a few of them did not want to take part. For example, Jonathan told me that he was too busy and that he did not have time for a discussion with me. When I first approached Ava she refused to take part in the interview, but later on she approached me, asking to be interviewed together with a friend. Other unexpected things happened during the negotiation of consent. An example is given below, of a case in which the teacher intervened in the process:

The teacher was explaining to children the technique to add fractions when they don't have the same number at the bottom. Some children seemed to be very confused and they were saying that they didn't understand anything. Ewan2 became very aggressive against the teacher, because he was very confused with the new mathematical concepts. Then, the teacher asked me if I want to take someone for an interview, because at the end of the lesson they would go to the park.

Krystallia: Yes, sure, but only if they won't miss anything important from the lesson.

Teacher: Who were you planning to take?

Krystallia: Ewan1?

Then, Ewan2 shouted loudly: NO! (in a very aggressive way)

The teacher reminded him, their agreement that is, to be polite.

So, I said that I actually meant Ewan1. The teacher told me that I could take Ewan1, because he is working on different things. Ewan1 came and he chose the space outside the classroom. However, I wasn't sure if he really wanted to be interviewed, so, I explained to him that this is not obligatory and that if he doesn't want to talk to me than it is OK. Then, I asked him: Are you sure that you want to talk to me? He nodded positively.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 3 June 2015]

All the interviews were recorded with consent from children, parents/caregivers and teacher. All were transcribed and stored in a secure, password protected, computer system (at the University of Edinburgh's DataSync software, which is installed on the University's computer) before being analysed.

4.2.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality was an important principle which was adopted for this study. It has been argued that:

‘The principle of confidentiality is that research data in which individual participants can be identified should not be passed on to other people without the explicit consent of those participants’ (Gallagher, 2009b:20).

To ensure confidentiality I informed the participants that all the data would be stored in a safe place (secure, password protected University computer) and no one but me would be given access to them (Gillham, 2000, Hancock and Algozzine, 2006). To ensure anonymity I did not reveal the name of the city and I replaced with pseudonyms the name of the school and the names of all the participants. My supervisor assisted me in choosing pseudonyms that would reflect the history of each name. So, Scottish names were replaced with Scottish pseudonyms, English names with English pseudonyms etc. Additionally, no information that might identify individuals or the school was or would be revealed in the research outputs. The limits to confidentiality when there are safety concerns about children have been discussed in ethics reports and in the relevant literature (see, for example, Gallagher, 2009b, Alderson and Morrow, 2011, Graham et al., 2013). In particular, the ‘Ethical Research Involving Children’ (ERIC) report prompts researchers to ‘be mindful that any assurance about confidentiality also includes explicit mention of the limits to this’ (Graham et al., 2013:74). Therefore, children and parents need to be informed at the consent stage that confidentiality may be breached if there are concerns about child protection, safety and well-being, ‘as an ethical necessity to prevent further harm from taking place’ (Gallagher, 2009:20). For this purpose, when designing the consent forms for children I added the following statement: ‘Only if I get worried, or if you are not safe, I will have to tell the teacher about what you have told me’ (see appendix entitled ‘Information leaflet and consent form for children’). Although I read this phrase aloud when explaining my research to the children and seeking their consent, I did not discuss this further with them. Therefore, it is difficult to establish whether the children understood what this statement meant and entailed. As previously argued, ‘it may be difficult to communicate to children precisely what kinds of harm researchers are referring to when informing them about the limits of confidentiality’, because children who have or haven’t experienced abuse may have diverse understandings of it (Gallagher, 2009:21).

The main reason why I did not discuss this statement further with the children was that the topic of my research was not sensitive and it was not the intention of my research to address sensitive themes. I was also worried that discussing safety concerns and explicitly informing children about the actions that would have to be followed after a potential

incident of having to breach confidentiality, might confuse them about the purposes of this research. However, although my research did not involve sensitive topics per se, I remained in the field for a long time, conducting ethnographic research. Therefore, the children shared various thoughts and feelings with me beyond their experiences of and perspectives on creativity. As such, it was possible for them to share sensitive issues with me – however, they did not do so during my fieldwork. I thus acknowledge the importance of explicitly mentioning and discussing the convention in research with children, that confidentiality may be breached if a child were to reveal that they or others were at risk of significant harm, and in future will endeavour to make sure that I give more thought to this issue. Parents should also be informed about the above statement. This was not done in this study and can be included among the limitations of this study. Again, I will give more thought to this issue in future.

Confidentiality issues were negotiated with children, as illustrated in the example below:

Ava: What are you going to do with these notes?
Krystallia: I will write a book. I will include my thoughts, your thoughts, other children's thoughts and your teacher's thoughts in it.
Ava: I want to buy it!
Krystallia: You can probably download it for free when I finish writing it!
Isa: Will you have our names in it?
Krystallia: I will give you different names. I will write down your thoughts, but I will change your name to a different name, so that no one will be able to know who you are.
Ava: Like fake names?
Krystallia: Yes.
Isa: Noooo...I want to be famous!!! I want my name in it!!!
Krystallia: I am afraid that the regulations don't allow me to use your real names...
[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 23 April 2015]

The discussion quoted above raised a problem for me, as I was not sure if I was being truly ethical. Children were sharing their thoughts with me and wanted to be publicly recognised for doing so, but I adopted a rigid stance and did not negotiate this matter further, as I had to stick to the ethical guidelines. Some other ethical challenges I faced are as follows. One day I was sitting with two children who were playing a game on the I-Pad, when they had told the teacher that they were doing a collaborative activity. On another day one girl started crying in the classroom. She refused to talk to her friends and when I asked her if she would like to talk to someone else, such as me or the teacher, she replied negatively.

In both cases I considered whether or not I should talk to the teacher. In the end I did not have to inform the teacher, as she became aware of what was happening. However, in such cases there was always a dilemma as to whether to follow the ethical guidelines strictly or to meet children's needs. In line with other researchers (Gillam and Guillemin, 2004), I felt that, in some cases, ethics had been imposed from outside, creating a tension between the ethical protocols and children's rights. In addition to the above, my fieldnotes did not include data on unexpected 'visitors' who entered the space where observation was being carried out. In such instances, I remained in the space and continued interacting with the children, but did not record any data on the visitors' actions.

4.3 Thinking critically about validity and reliability: the use of reflexivity

4.3.1 Thinking critically about validity and reliability in qualitative research

Validity is used by researchers in educational research and has to do with 'findings that reflect reality and meanings of data that are accurately interpreted' (Hinds et al., 1990:431). This accurate capture of events (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995) is divided into the categories of internal and external validity (Avis, 1995). Internal validity is about the 'confidence that can be placed on the evidence' (Avis, 1995:1204), while external validity is about 'the extent to which research findings can be generalised to other samples and settings' (Avis, 1995:1204). Validity has been widely criticised for being driven by the positivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005a, Koch and Harrington, 1998, Morse et al., 2002) and it is argued that it should not be used in qualitative studies (Rolfe, 2006). Some researchers have used trustworthiness – which emphasises the reflexive process (Savin-Baden and Major, 2012) – instead of validity. Trustworthiness is divided into credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Koch and Harrington, 1998, Rolfe, 2006). Although trustworthiness is proposed by many researchers for use in qualitative studies, it has also been criticised. For example, for Sandelowski (1993:2) trustworthiness 'becomes a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist is viewed as having made those practices visible and therefore, auditable; it is less a matter of claiming to be right about a phenomenon than of having practiced good science'.

Reliability requires the replicability of the data, by using the same or different research techniques and by assuring the integrity of the findings (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). However, reliability is regarded as highly connected to validity, because 'any attempt to increase reliability involves a forced or artificial consensus and conformity in the analysis of the data, which is usually at the expense of the validity or meaningfulness of the findings' (Rolfe, 2006:305). And reliability has also been linked to positivism, as it involves the idea that data should be repeatable by anyone and in every context (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

The present research is qualitative and, as a result, the use of the terms validity and reliability is questionable. Instead, this research uses rigour (Morse et al., 2002) in various ways, as mentioned below. First of all, I adopted a careful attitude while collecting and interpreting the data, doing so to try to understand and present people's own perspectives (Mason, 2002), rather than to suit my ideas and purposes. Furthermore, Morrow and Richards (1996, citing Mayall, 1994), bring to light another important issue in relation to rigour, that is, that children sometimes make things up to please the interviewer. Also, it is suggested that the views that children express are sometimes views of their significant others which the children repeat (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). In order to eliminate this danger, I explained to the children that there are not right and wrong answers during the interview process and that they would help me and my research very much if they expressed their real thoughts and emotions. In this thesis, the replicability of the findings on any occasion and by anybody is not guaranteed. Nevertheless, I tried to present my data and findings in such a way that the reader can follow my rationale. Additionally, by presenting the participants' own perspectives (Mason, 2002) – attempting to minimise my interpretation of their views – this research provides insights into how creativity is perceived in one Scottish Primary School classroom. However, this does not mean that the analysis of the findings merely reflects the reality in this classroom; the reader can also make connections or spot differences with what is happening in other settings.

Another focal point that makes the research process more transparent and, thus, enhances its rigour, is the representation of people's different perspectives. From a post-structural standpoint, people like Laclau and Mouffe (1985) support the idea that concepts such as ambiguity and polysemy exist within structures. This argument has relevance to childhood

studies, as it is argued that children also represent and express different perspectives (James et al., 1998). It is argued that in post-structural ethnography the researcher seeks to collect the multiple truths that exist in the social world (Denzin, 1997). Following this perspective, I as a researcher accept the fact that there is no single truth, but multiple versions of it (Denzin, 1997). The existence of multiple truths is also discussed by postmodernists such as Baudrillard (1983), who argues:

‘When real is no longer what it used to be...There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of a second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity...There is an escalation of the true, of the lived experience’ (Baudrillard, 1983:12).

In ethnographic studies, the collection of multiple truths is not enough, as the ethnographer must also depict those truths in a text. As is outlined, ‘a text must embody multiple masks as it seeks to unmask the regimes of truth that structure experience in any given situation’ (Denzin, 1997:13). Taking all the foregoing into account and for the purposes of the present research, I followed Denzin’s (1997:13) argument, producing ‘a text that reproduces those multiple versions of the real, showing how each version impinges on and shapes the phenomenon being studied’.

Reflexivity has also been used for making this research process more transparent to the reader. It was embedded in various stages of this research, as described in the following section.

4.3.2 Reflexivity

This section starts by defining reflexivity, then outlines how reflexivity is incorporated in this research. Also, it describes some critiques of reflexivity and provides the rationale of this study. The aim of this section is not to separate reflexivity from other parts of the thesis, but to provide an overview of the reflexive elements that can be found throughout the text.

Reflexivity is an integral part of the ethnographic process, according to many researchers (Bolton, 2010, Davis et al., 2000, Konstantoni, 2011). It is defined as ‘the thoughtful reflection of a researcher upon the impact of her or his research on the participants, their social world, on the researcher her- or himself and on the knowledge produced’ (Tisdall

et al., 2009:229). It is argued that, within qualitative research, the researcher, the methodology and the data are 'reflexively interdependent and interconnected' (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003:414). Furthermore, reflexivity is associated with the transparency and accountability of the research process (Walby, 2007) and with concerns about whether or not researchers should include their emotions within the reflexive process (Davies, 2012).

Reflexivity is described as a 'critical gaze' towards the researcher (Finlay, 2003:3) and as an 'ongoing self-awareness' (Pillow, 2003:178). For this research I adopted a reflexive role by being a participant observer, 'participating in the social world and reflecting on the products of that participation' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:15). During the participant observation I was initiating internal dialogue by posing questions to myself and being critical of what I observed (Bolton, 2006, Bolton, 2010). My reflexive adult role was also enhanced by adopting the role of a learner, in which the researcher is 'a respectful initiant who analyses how his/her behaviour fits in with those of his/her teachers and how it does not' (Davis, 2000:192). Additionally, it is indicated that 'the concept of reflexivity acknowledges that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including values and interests that these locations confer upon them' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:15). The researcher's social location carries the researcher's own values and culture (Davis, 1998) and should not be seen negatively, but as a basis on which the researcher can understand other people's cultures (Davis, 2000), besides representing an opportunity to create more reflexive practices as a result of creative communication and exchange between different cultures (Davis, 1998). Furthermore, as part of my role in the field, the concept of belonging was perceived as a dynamic process, including social and ethical choices and locations (Yuval-Davis, 2006). However, during the data generation phase, questions regarding 'how reflexive I can be' and 'how far I can know and understand what shapes the research at the time of conducting it' (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003:415) were part of my self-questioning process.

Reflexivity also involves listening to the participants' authentic voices and making attempts to understand their perspectives (Pillow, 2003). For some researchers this is associated with enabling the participants to have an active role in the data generation process by being co-researchers (Finlay, 2003). In this research, the participants were given an active role during the interview process, in which they could bring prompts of their choice and express what creativity means to them. Also, during the interview process

I adopted the role of a reflective listener (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Furthermore, during the dissemination process the participants were given the opportunity to critique the methods of data generation that were chosen for this research (Davis, 2000), as well as to express their views on the initial findings.

Reflexivity is related to the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions (Walby, 2007). For example, in the positivistic paradigm the researchers try to maintain objectivity (Greenbank, 2003). However, it is argued that even within the positivistic paradigm complete neutrality cannot be achieved by the researcher (Greenbank, 2003). The present research is located within the post-structural/postmodern research paradigm which recognises reflexivity as a core characteristic (Bolton, 2010, Atkinson, 2003). This research followed suggestions within the post-structural paradigm to locate the social into the text (Derrida, 1987).

Reflexivity has also been criticised for various aspects of it. It is stated that 'there is a moral dimension to the selective use of information' through reflective practices (Fine et al., 2000:796) and also that reflexivity is a confusing term (Lynch, 2000). It is further argued that reflexivity is not radical enough and cannot empower people's voices (Lynch, 2000). In contrast to the aforementioned arguments, Davis (2000:197) explains that this can be overcome by creating 'space through which a variety of people empower themselves by legitimising their different everyday experience'. In this research, children were empowered by being able to choose the extent to which they wanted to contribute to the research (Davis, 1998). Additionally, Patai (1994) debates whether self-reflexivity produces better research. In the present study I consider self-reflexivity an important characteristic, as it allowed me to gain insights into the field (Hertz, 1997) and to reflect on aspects of power relations and my adult role in the field.

The following section describes the process of documenting the data through fieldnotes, the analysis of those data and, finally, the process of dissemination to the participants in this study, as well as to a wider audience at academic conferences.

4.4 Writing fieldnotes, analysis and dissemination

4.4.1 Writing fieldnotes

Keeping fieldnotes is an integral part of participant observation as a form of representation of what happened in the field, which is then written into the text (Emerson et al., 2001). When I first entered the field I was confused because of the plethora of information and data that could be generated. So, I decided to start by obtaining a wide understanding of what is happening in the field (Pole and Morrison, 2003). As a Greek person, I was unfamiliar with day-to-day practices in Scottish primary schools. Thus it was necessary for me to acquire a broad picture of Scottish practices in primary education, before narrowing down the focus of my observations. From the first day of my entrance in the field I started to jot down observations in my notebook. These notes became more and more focused and detailed over time.

I decided not to follow the strategy of comprehensive note-taking (Wolfinger, 2002), because it was impossible for me to have an overview and describe everything that took place during a specific period of time. Most of the time the children were working in groups and in different spaces, so I was unable to obtain an overall picture. Instead, I based my notes on episodes. The term episodes is used by Emerson et al. (2001) to give a representation of what is happening in the field. The episodes are described as ‘fieldnote tales’, which are episodes connected through the researcher’s narrative and include representations of dialogue (Emerson et al., 2001:359).

What I did in practical terms was, first of all, to organise the notes from my notebook and write them down in greater detail. When I returned home I produced more detailed written accounts, using the jottings in my notebook as a guide to refresh my memory (Pole and Morrison, 2003). The jottings were sometimes messy and sometimes more detailed, but in both cases, I wanted to record as much data as possible. So I developed a system of personal abbreviations (Woods, 1986). For example, I used only the initial letters for most of the names and also other symbols, such as arrows and other visuals that helped me to remember the context in more detail, without using as much time as it would take to describe everything in words. I also took pictures of some leaflets that the teacher distributed and of other activities and prompts. All the jottings were typed up on my computer in chronological order (Emerson et al., 2001). Emerson et al. (2001) mention

that while some ethnographers prefer writing down the key features of what they observe, others prefer to create thick descriptions. I preferred to follow the latter procedure ‘so that if one was to read the field-notes, he/she could have a complete understanding of the scene, or even visualise it’ (Konstantoni, 2011:88).

The fieldnotes included detailed descriptions of my observations, as well as direct quotes of what was discussed or said. I kept a record of dates and times and I also mentioned the space where I was on each occasion, as well as the names of the people who were being observed. I also tried to pay attention to, and to write down, not only verbal messages, but also non-verbal ones, such as body language or other related information. I kept notes of interactions between people, of activities, of different spaces and of my thoughts and feelings. However, I chose not to keep notes on my thoughts and feelings in my notebook, as this could be accessed by the teacher or the children. So, I included that information only on the digital version of my fieldnotes, which I typed up on my computer. As those digital notes could not be accessed by my participants, I chose not to keep another notebook as a reflexive diary, as other researchers do (Konstantoni, 2011, Kustatscher, 2015). I preferred to keep everything in one place (digital version of fieldnotes) and so to be able to connect the notes from the field with my feelings directly. My personal belief about keeping my thoughts and feelings in a different place was that this would create a separation between myself and what was happening in field. As I did not adopt a value-free stance, but was aware that my ‘background knowledge influences which cases are chosen for annotation’ (Wolfinger, 2002:90), and that the interpretation of the data was made by me, I felt that there was no need to separate my thoughts and feelings from the facts. However, I used another notebook for keeping notes about my thoughts on parts of the relevant literature and for writing down quotations from the literature that were related to this study.

As I felt that I had nothing to hide from my participants, and because they knew that I was keeping notes, I didn’t think about the size of my notebook, which might be considered big. This was of A4 size with a hard cover, chosen to enable me to keep notes without needing a foothold. I also tried to communicate to the children that this was not *my* notebook, but a book that we all create together, as described in the following excerpt from my fieldnotes:

‘I want to show them that all of us create this book. They contribute a lot by talking to me, letting me participate and observe their interactions. I want to make them feel familiar with the notebook, to show them that we co-create what is inside and that they have a key role on what is included in my notes.’

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 01 April 2015]

The children did not choose to write in my notebook very often, but they sometimes asked me to read my notes about them. In contrast, the teachers never asked to see my notes.

Finally, when I was writing notes, I realised, like other researchers (Gallagher, 2004), that some children who were more talkative or more confident were over-represented in my fieldnotes, in contrast with children who kept a lower profile. Although I tried to talk to the low-profile children more, to ask them more questions and to try to involve them more in the discussion, I do not think that I achieved my goal for several reasons. First of all, I did not want to make anyone feel pressured by my presence, especially when children had to finish up their tasks or were very focused on their work. I acknowledged that not all the children could manage their time in the same way and not all were willing to participate in my research to the same extent. So, I acknowledge that some children are over-represented compared to others and this can be included among the limitations of this study. Another limitation is that children did not always have the opportunity to interpret their actions, because of time limits and their busy schedule. Thus I did not always have the opportunity to ask them to elaborate on their actions and to share their views. Instead, I sometimes made my own interpretations of what was happening. However, I tried to minimise this during the interview process, when I was also asking questions seeking their reflections on some of their previous actions or activities.

4.4.2 Analysis

Qualitative data were collected from participant observation and interviews, as presented above. It is argued that not enough focus and guidance is provided for data analysis within childhood studies (Gallagher, 2009a). One reason for that might be that in qualitative, ethnographic research, analysis is an ongoing process that takes place throughout the fieldwork process and is not separated from it (Punch, 2009). Citing Brewer (2000), Pole and Morrison (2003:78) argue that researchers who adopt an ethnographic approach within a postmodern framework use reflexivity as a key aspect of the analysis process, paying

attention to methodological choices, relationships and ‘broader educational, socio-economic and political contexts in which the research took place’. So, in this context, researchers do not usually prefer to use the scientific methods of data analysis that are popular within positivistic frameworks (Pole and Morrison, 2003). In this section, I explain the process of data analysis used in this study and I also explain the choices that I made in various parts of the analysis and writing-up process.

In this study, the analysis process started at the very beginning, from the time I began to collect data, as themes started to emerge during the participant observation and the interview process. By the time I left the field a number of themes had already emerged. When I finished writing down the fieldnotes and transcribing the interviews I printed out all the data. At this time I separated the data from the fieldnotes from the data from the interview transcriptions, in order to remind myself where each part of the data came from. I read all the data several times to become familiar with them and then I started producing some initial codes. I jotted down the categories next to the printed text, using a pencil. At the same time, I gathered all the emerging categories together on a separate sheet of paper. This helped me to have an overview of all the different categories. I then started organising the categories into groups and creating broader categories, each with several subcategories. After that I created a Word document in which I copied and pasted excerpts from my data under the relevant category or subcategory. However, a problem that emerged during the process of analysing the data manually was that some data fitted into more than one category. This was why I decided to use NVivo, a supportive software for analysis of qualitative data. The use of computer programmes that aim to assist researchers with the analysis of qualitative data has been criticised by researchers, who argue that the use of such programmes reinforces the positivistic paradigm, by aiming to impose objectivity onto qualitative, interpretive processes (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). This is not the case with the present study, as NVivo was not used to enhance the reliability of the data analysis process, but to help me manage the data by grouping them together under various categories. However, after familiarising myself with NVivo I felt that I was distancing myself from my data. Therefore, I ended up doing my analysis on Word and on paper. So, after organising all my data under the thematic categories I had created, I printed everything out, spread it all out on the floor, picked which pieces of data I would use and tried to make connections between the different themes. I followed this process first for

my data from participant observations and then for data from my fieldnotes, before combining all these data together.

An important part of the analysis process in this study was the use of reflexivity. Other researchers also argue that reflexivity is a very important element in ethnographic studies (Davis, 2000, Konstantoni, 2011). Drawing on Okely (1994), Davis (2000:193) mentions that ethnography is ‘a constant reflexive process in which re-working and re-understanding of observations and experiences eventually leads to a story which represents the interaction between the culture of ethnographer and the cultures of those he/she has studied’. It is argued that ethnographers who use a post-structural framework acknowledge their subjectivity by viewing themselves reflexively as ‘persons writing from particular positions at specific times’ (Richardson et al., 2005:962). In this study, by viewing people as interdependent within ‘a complex web of intimate and larger social relations’ (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003:422), I tried to reflexively embed myself within the group’s culture by observing, questioning and, finally, interpreting and analysing the data (Clifford, 1983). Reflexivity also helped me to locate myself in the field socially and emotionally (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). Through this reflexive prism I recognise that my understanding of my observations was associated with my background and my previous experiences (Hughes, 2010). Thus, my class, gender and race (Hughes, 2010), as well as my social and political locations (Gillam and Guillemin, 2004), affected the choices I made, the way I conducted this research and, finally, the interpretations and the analysis of the data. This reflexive stance was also influenced by the postmodern/post-structural research paradigm of this study (Gallagher, 2009a). It is observed that:

‘Data analysis methods are not just neutral techniques. They reflect, and are imbued with, theoretical, epistemological and ontological assumptions – including conceptions of subjects and subjectivities, and understandings of how knowledge is constructed and produced’ (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003:413).

In this study I made an attempt to embed reflexivity throughout all the stages of analysis and the writing-up process, so as to give the reader the opportunity to understand how my subjectivity was involved in the data that have been produced, my interpretation of those data, and the written text.

In terms of the written text, influenced by postmodern and post-structural assumptions, this study questions the authority of the text (Denzin, 1997). It promotes the reconsideration of the text's subjectivity and the location of the social into the text, as presented by Derrida (1987). More specifically, citing Derrida (1987), Denzin (1997:xii) states:

‘A theory of the social is also a theory of writing. A theory of writing is also a theory of interpretive (ethnographic) work. Theory, writing and ethnography are inseparable material practices. Together they create conditions that locate the social inside the text’.

In this thesis I tried to overthrow the hegemonic tendencies of the writing process (Clifford, 1983) by sharing the authority of the written account with the participants in this research. Davis (2000:196) suggests the creation of polyphonic written accounts through the recognition of people's different, conflicting and competing perspectives on the same phenomena. Davis (2000:197) also suggests that ‘the authority of the writer is dispersed, not by letting others actually write the final text, but by letting their variety of voices have equal authority’. This research followed the aforementioned arguments in an attempt to translate the fieldwork experience into text by representing the variety and diversity of experiences (Clifford, 1983).

4.4.3 Dissemination

Dissemination is an important part of the research process (Tisdall, 2009), not only because it is an ethical necessity, but also because it is important for children to know that their views were heard and valued (Tisdall and Davis, 2004). For these reasons, I arranged a meeting with the teacher and the children in order to share my initial findings with them. After presenting my findings, I tried to make the process more active (Tisdall, 2009) by discussing the initial themes and getting feedback from the children and the teacher. An active discussion occurred between children, teacher and myself. Finally, I decided to give the participants the opportunity to critique my findings and also my research methods (Davis, 2000). So, I asked them if I could have done something different in order to understand what creativity means to them. Ian suggested that I would have a better understanding of what creativity means to them if I did a piece of artwork or an activity with them by being one of them, a child. Olivia agreed, mentioning that I would have understood more if I had been in the position of a child. I found this argument very

interesting and I asked them why they believed that. Ian's explanation was that I would be doing the same thing they were doing so I would have been able to understand how children do things. Juliet (the teacher) also commented on this suggestion, saying that being in the position of the child can be very powerful. Their comments and critiques helped be to me more critical about my role in the field and my research practice, and provided me with valuable insights into what could have been done differently.

Findings of this research have also been presented at some academic conferences. The themes of my presentations were related to multimodality in educational research, to inclusive practices in schools, to research methodologies for actively involving children within the data generation process, to the influences of teachers' leadership on children's creativity, and to the effects of outcome-based approaches to children's creativity within the Curriculum for Excellence. The feedback from those conference presentations has been helpful for developing my thinking around my research. For example, one of the suggestions made to me, about using aspects of intersectionality, prompted me to seek information about the background and identities of my participants.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the ethical issues involved in doing research with children. Also, I provided a reflexive account of my experience of fieldwork and the challenges that arose in practice during the process of obtaining informed and ongoing consent. Furthermore, I explored issues of rigour and reflexivity and presented the process of data analysis and writing, as well as the dissemination process of this research.

In section 4.2 I discussed the ethical considerations that arise when doing research with children and explained the process of gaining access to the field. In section 4.2.1 I mentioned that I used quadruple consent and described the process of obtaining informed consent from parents by distributing leaflets and consent forms to them. I also highlighted the fact that I became aware of a paradox brought to light by other researchers (see Konstantoni and Kustatscher, 2016): that of children being asked to provide their consent last, despite the fact that they were the main participants in my research. Additionally, I explained the system of boxes, which was developed as an attempt to give children the

opportunity to opt-in and opt-out anytime; this system is in line with arguments that informed consent should be a reflexive, ongoing and renegotiable process (David et al., 2001, Gallagher, 2009a, Hammersley, 2015), and that researchers should reflect on the power dynamics in the field (Gallacher et al., 2008, Holt, 2004). Furthermore, although this system was influenced by similar techniques (see Gallagher, 2004, Kustatscher, 2015), it also provided children with the opportunity to opt-in and opt-out confidentially, without revealing their preferences to their peers or to the teacher. In section 4.2.2 I explained the importance of confidentiality and anonymity and how I ensured that I followed these principles.

In section 4.3 I explored the concepts of validity and reliability and explained how these link to the positivistic paradigm (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995) and I discussed my preference for using the term ‘rigour’ to describe the transparency of my findings, achieved by representing people’s different perspectives. In section 4.3.2 I explored the use of reflexivity throughout this research, which was linked to actively and deeply listening to the participants’ authentic voices (Pillow, 2003) and to obtaining better understanding of the field through self-reflexivity (Hertz, 1997).

Finally, in section 4.4 I shed light on the process of writing fieldnotes, explaining the stages I followed, from initially trying to obtain a wide understanding of what is happening in the field (Pole and Morrison, 2003), towards a more organised and systematic method that included the development of a personal system of abbreviations (Woods, 1986), following chronological order when typing up the notes on my computer (Emerson et al., 2001) and creating thick descriptions of my observations (Konstantoni, 2011). In section 4.4.2 I provided a detailed explanation of the process of analysis and my rationale for not using NVivo but, instead, organising and analysing my data manually, on paper and on Word. I also highlighted the importance of embedding reflexivity in the analysis process, which helped me to re-work and re-understand my observations (Davis, 2000). In section 4.4.3 I provided a record of the dissemination practices for this research so far, including a discussion with my research participants and some presentations at academic conferences.

Chapter 5: Exploring creativity through collaboration, co-construction, power and diversity

5.1 Introduction

Current research indicates the importance of co-constructive learning (Craft et al., 2014), which places children's diversities to the fore and rejects perspectives that view children as a homogeneous group (Davis and Smith, 2012, Tisdall, 2012). It is also argued that difference and diversity are important components of the promotion of creativity (Glaveanu et al., 2015). Furthermore, recent research has highlighted the importance of recognising creative processes, rather than merely paying attention to the quality of the final products and outputs (Davis, 2013). Finally, it has also been illustrated that teacher-child relationships which are built on trust (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015), the teacher's positive attitude towards co-operative teaching (Dababneh et al., 2010), and the promotion of learning environments that provide flexible time and spaces (Craft et al., 2013, Craft et al., 2014) are all parameters that boost creativity.

The gaps that have been identified in the above literature are linked to the need for greater focus on collaborative creativity and on the power dynamics and complexities within collectivities. This chapter addresses these gaps through the following research questions: a) How is children's creativity experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom? and b) What are the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity?

To answer these questions, this chapter draws on fieldnotes and interviews with teachers and children as data. These data are organised and presented under key themes. First of all, I present children's and teachers' views on collaborative and co-constructive creative learning and give an example of practical implementation of creativity through collaboration and co-construction. Then, I explore the cultural barriers that emerged during collaborative work, which include the following themes: collaboration perceived as a synthesis of individual tasks, barriers to creativity due to the teacher's interventions,

and barriers created from intersections between different categories, such as academic performance, disability, gender, race and emotions.

5.2 Collaboration, co-construction and creativity

5.2.1 Children's views on collaboration, co-construction and creativity

Some of the most common messages that children communicated to me regarding collaborative work were that collective spaces gave them the opportunity to help each other, combine their ideas and, through this process, enhance their creativity. These themes are noticeable in the following excerpts, which include parts of my conversation with Isa and Alastair, respectively.

Isa: If you are stuck you can get help from other people and also if they are stuck you can help them and I think it works really nicely and then you can say; 'Do you need any help?' and stuff like that and then it helps both of you finish your PAC tasks, because if you were sitting, the teacher would say you shouldn't stay on one task for the whole time...like if you are stuck you should move on and then either go and find a friend or something and I think it works really nicely.

[Interview with Isa, 03 June 2015]

Collaborative work was very important to Isa because she could help others, but could also be helped. As Isa mentioned, collaborative work brings particular benefits to children who face some difficulties with their tasks, but at the same time it is equally helpful to children who help others, as they get to be more active and motivated. Isa's view (which was a prevalent view in this classroom and was shared among most children) indicates the importance of collective and supportive spaces in schools, often presented in the literature as co-constructive learning. For example, from the perspective of scholars linked to the progressive education movement, Dewey (2011) highlighted that the idea that meaningful learning is facilitated through the combined action of children and teachers, while Freire (1994) paid particular attention to learning as a process of being with the other, co-constructing the future.

Collaborative work was crucial for Isa, as presented in the above excerpt. In addition, Isa discussed and explained her views on creativity, co-construction and collaboration more analytically, as shown below.

Krystallia: Do you think that creativity is something individual or that it can also happen in a group?

Isa: In a group. I think it can be individual and in groups because you could have your own like painting but I could do...like say I was doing a painting and I could do my own painting. It would be different from the group painting, because everyone will put their ideas in and it will be just my ideas in my own painting but I like when all the group puts their ideas in because I think it turns out better.

Krystallia: Why do you think it turns out better?

Isa: Because the more people the better it is, because everyone's ideas put together and that's really good. If everyone chips in and puts on their idea it will look like really good and if one person just puts in their idea it's like you could do much more.

[Interview with Isa, 03 June 2015]

Similarly, Alastair drew links between creativity and collaborative work, as in the following comment:

Krystallia: Do you prefer to work in groups or alone?

Alastair: I prefer to work in groups because more people can have ideas and when like the whole group comes up with like different individual ideas you can put parts of these ideas into one big idea, that's really good. And that idea will probably be really creative.

[Interview with Alastair, 08 June 2015]

The aforementioned quotes are representative of the answers I received from many children from this classroom and helps us to understand how children perceive the interaction between the individual and the social. From a psychological perspective, Csikszentmihalyi divides creativity into three parts: the domain with its rules, the individual who brings novelty, and the field in which the individual acts (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, Starko, 2010, Sawyer, 2006). Also, Csikszentmihalyi (1997) stresses the importance of the interactions between culture, people who bring innovation, and a field of experts who judge the products, as elements required for creativity to flourish (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). However, Csikszentmihalyi's approach relies heavily on gifted individuals and on the quality of the final products, which is in contrast to children's perspectives, as mentioned above. More specifically, in the above excerpts Isa argued that 'everyone will

put their ideas', and 'I like when all group puts their ideas in because I think it turns out better', while Alastair mentioned that 'the whole group comes up with different ideas'. Such statements were typical of the wider dataset, where most children did not perceive creativity as having to do with individual gifts, but as being enhanced by diverse ideas contributed by many people. Therefore, children's conceptualisation of collaboration, creativity and co-construction were not in line with Csikszentmihalyi's attention paid to the gifted individual. Instead, the arguments developed in this section point to the ability of all children to be involved in co-construction and collective approaches to creativity.

Additionally, although both Isa and Alastair conceived collaborative work and co-construction as very important and dynamic processes, they did not include creativity as part of the process of working together. Instead, in their responses they both linked creativity to the outcome of the collaborative process (e.g. 'it turns out better'; 'if everyone chips in and puts on their idea it will look like really good'). The responses I got from other children on this aspect were mixed; in particular, some children shared the view that creativity is linked to the outcome of the collaborative process, whilst others viewed creativity as being rooted in co-constructive work and in collaborative relationships. The former approach reflects a very dominant discourse in the field of creativity in education, which places productivity at the core of what creative learning should be. The influential report from the National Advisory Committee on Creativity and Cultural Education entitled 'All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education' (NACCCE, 1999) mentions that 'creativity is obviously to do with producing something original' (NACCCE, 1999:28), whilst their definition of creativity is: 'Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value' (NACCCE, 1999:30). Furthermore, summarising research on creativity, Sharp (2004:5) indicates 'productivity' and 'the ability to produce an outcome of value and worth' as key components of creativity. In addition to the aforementioned reports, the final outcome-product is used to define creativity in psychological research (Runco and Pagnani, 2011). For example, Runco (2007a) developed a hierarchical framework for the study of creativity, placing products as part of the creative performance.

By contrast, other research on creativity argues that learners should take risks, give diverse responses (Jindal-Snape et al., 2013), and also be included 'in the process of what knowledge is investigated, discovered and valued' (Craft and Jeffrey, 2004:41). Such

arguments focus more on processes than on outcomes. As explained in the Creanova project, creativity is linked more to the process and innovation to the outcome (Davis et al., 2011). However, the word innovation was not used at all by the children, who seemed to use the term creativity to describe both concepts.

Summarising and linking the above to research question 2 (on how children's creativity is experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom), one can draw the following conclusions. First of all, the importance of collaborative work was highly valued and children put forward the argument that every individual has the ability to be involved in co-constructive and collective approaches to creativity. One can also conclude from the above that creativity was not always perceived as part of the co-constructive framework, because it was often viewed as the outcome (rather than the process) of collaboration. The next section presents teachers' views on collaboration, co-construction and creativity.

5.2.2 Teachers' views on collaboration, co-construction and creativity

The context in which children frame their understanding of what creativity is and where it exists is also influenced by what is considered important by the teacher (Juliet). For example, in the previous section, Isa seemed to pay considerable attention to the teacher's guidance on finishing a certain number of tasks within limited timeframes. The following excerpt presents the teacher's views on collaboration, co-construction and creativity:

Juliet: I think by doing things like this ['This' refers to a previous example that Juliet gave. In that example, she mentioned that children do not need teachers to pour all the knowledge into them, but can support and learn a lot from each other], and by giving them a lot of examples and lot of opportunities in modelling things and also by letting children work with each other. I think they learn a great amount from each other not just from me and so I think, sometimes we are just giving an outcome and say, you need to learn French vocabulary for your family. And you need to be able by the end of today or by the end of the week or whatever time-frame you give, you need to be able to talk about your family. Who is in your family, what's the vocabulary, how might you learn this? And you might say we might make a game or we could watch something on YouTube and they will come up with all the ideas they want. And someone who is not very good at coming up with new ideas will hear a friend and think: I love that! And they'll go away and they'll...they'll do it!

[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

In the above quote, Juliet mentioned the importance of providing children with lots of examples, as well as opportunities for experimentation. Such arguments are also mentioned in the Scottish report entitled *Creativity in Education* (IDES, 2001), which prompts teachers to encourage (amongst other things) experimentation and problem-solving within collaborative frameworks (IDES, 2001, Craft, 2011, Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015). Furthermore, Juliet's approach is in line with arguments that creativity is fostered when teachers promote children's curiosity and active engagement (Craft et al., 2014) and when they provide thought-provoking examples (Jindal-Snape et al., 2013).

Juliet also placed emphasis on the benefits of collaborative work regarding children's learning. As she mentioned, collaboration helps children learn and motivate each other and, additionally, confers greater flexibility with which to collectively control their learning. Her explanation on engaging children by asking them to be autonomous and to decide on how they learn, manifested an open and flexible approach, which is supported by scholars in the field of creativity (Craft et al., 2014, Cremin et al., 2006, Jeffrey and Woods, 2009). As Wiggins (2011:321) mentions, 'creative learning demands very little "teaching" as long as there are clear challenges, good feedback, and choices for the learner to make'. However, not every part of the process that Juliet presented could be described as co-constructive. For example, the amount of children's involvement in some parts of the learning process (e.g. managing the time frame) seemed to be quite rigidly controlled by the teacher. Thus, although Juliet made considerable effort to build flexible and collaborative practices, the process could not be described as co-constructive, since children and teacher were not always working closely to 'generate new ways of understanding, doing and engaging' (Craft et al., 2014).

Although Juliet's arguments on collaborative work have been supported by scholars who argue that collaboration fosters creative learning (Craft et al., 2014, Craft et al., 2013, Davis, 2013, Watson, 2012, Wright, 2010, Paulus, 1999, Wiggins, 2011, Gammage, 1996), policy documents and reports do not always back up that suggestion. For example, a recent document from Scotland, entitled '*Creativity Across Learning 3-18*' (2013), puts forward arguments that contradict the above, mentioning that 'Creative learning describes the range of activities and approaches undertaken by an individual which supports the

development of creativity and other skills' (p3). Furthermore, the authors of this document state that 'collaboration is not necessarily part of the creative process, and there are many examples throughout history, particularly in the arts, of creativity as a successful and individual pursuit' (p5). It is possible to summarise, based on the above, that teachers have to deal with contradictory information and advice on what creativity is and how they can best promote it in schools.

This section discussed teachers' perspectives on creativity and collaboration. Juliet proposed that creativity is linked to collaboration and vice versa, through the creation of open and flexible approaches to teaching and learning that promote experimentation and encourage children's active engagement. Furthermore, although Juliet placed much emphasis on the creation of open and flexible approaches, her description did not involve co-constructive processes, since sometimes the adult had more control over specific parts (e.g. time management). It is important, finally, to mention that Juliet's perspectives on collaboration and creativity were developed within a context of contradictory information and advice given to teachers. I would thus like to argue that developing an open approach and avoiding the production of rigid definitions of creativity could leave more space for both teachers and children to perceive and perform creativity in their own, diverse – but equally valuable – ways. The next section explores what collaboration, co-construction and creativity look like in practice by analysing the case of two children, Ava and Alice.

5.2.3 Exploring how creativity travels through collaboration and co-construction, using the example of Ava and Alice

The previous two sections explored children's and the teacher's perspectives on collaboration, co-construction and creativity. This section provides an example of how these concepts can be implemented in practice, by exploring how creativity travels through Ava's and Alice's collaborative and co-constructive work.

Overall, in this P7 classroom, children were mostly working in groups of their own choice. This choice was based either on their ability level, or on relationships between children, or on both. In this case, Ava and Alice were close friends, but also belonged to the same level of ability (for an analytical discussion on ability levels see chapter 6 of this thesis). Ava and Alice were both quite dominant figures in the classroom; they were both white

and of a similar height. They were very close friends with Isa and sometimes would also collaborate with boys. Alice was an extroverted person with a very theatrical way of expressing herself and her dream was to become an actress. Ava was also very active and both of them were quite talkative, both with me and also with other children.

That day the teacher (Juliet) announced that she would not give the children more tasks, but would give them more time to complete unfinished tasks. One of these tasks was the creation of the Keeping Myself Safe (KMS) poster. The production of that poster was part of a series of activities, films and discussions taking place in the classroom with the aim of making children aware of possible dangers, as well as learning techniques to keep themselves safe.

Ava and Alice started the day by creating the KMS poster. They sat at a round table at the back of the classroom. I was sitting on a chair next to them and no-one else was sitting at the same table. On this occasion, the collaboration between Ava and Alice could be described as co-constructive, as shown in the example below.

Ava and Alice decided to start by quickly planning how to design the title of their poster. They decided to sketch the outline of the letters 'KMS' and then to fill in each letter with sketches of possible dangers. Alice started with the first letter and Ava did the next one. They both contributed to the creation of the letter 'S'. The letter 'K' was filled in with bricks of different sizes and colours, but mainly with red bricks. The letter 'M' was designed like a road with two traffic lights, one on each top corner of the letter. 'S' had a starting and a finishing line (at the top and at the bottom, respectively) and three figures of people were drawn in the middle. The two girls did not spend much time creating the title, but I was impressed by their ability to very quickly create such a powerful and eye-catching message that would inform people of the key message with a quick glance at the poster. After finishing up the title, they then moved on to the next part of the poster.

Ava: What should be the title for the middle?

Alice: Are we doing a mind map?

Ava: Yes.

Ava: Know the signs?

Alice: No... (thinking)

Alice grabbed the paper (the only thing that was written on it was the title, i.e. KMS) and proposed that they could draw a round grass park, surrounded by a fence.

Ava said that she liked this idea. She agreed with the idea of creating a grass park, but also proposed the illustration of a sign, which could be used to explain the main message to the audience. She also proposed that they leave

some space below the grass park, where they could write a short text and an explanation of what the picture was trying to communicate.
Alice: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah!!
[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 20 May 2015]

The above excerpt gives an example of collaborative, co-constructive work. The teacher proposed a general aim, i.e. to create a poster that addressed the 'Keeping Myself Safe' theme, but beyond that, children had much flexibility in choosing who to work with and in coming up with a plan for designing the poster. So, in this case, children worked in peer-groups without being excessively supported and supervised by an adult (Galton, 1992). Also, by promoting an attitude of trust, the teacher encouraged children to be autonomous and to take decisions in terms of what worked best for them (Davis and Smith, 2012). This is closely connected to arguments that have been developed in the field of creativity. In particular, it is argued that opportunities for children to control their learning is one of the parameters that reinforce creativity (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004, Craft, 2005). Overall, children were prompted to take more actions and, thus, to be more involved in the interplays of power (Foucault, 2002:344). In the case of Alice and Ava, power moved through their relationship in a way that created an enabling environment to their creativity. In particular, their individual actions did not block or restrain the other person's actions; instead, the children's actions worked upon each other, creating a fruitful atmosphere in which more possibilities and actions could emerge. Therefore, actions such as Alice's when she grabbed the paper, said 'no' to Ava's ideas, and so on, were not perceived as restrictive but instead, reinforced the productive character of children's collaborative relationship and enhanced their experiences of creativity.

Regarding the project Ava and Alice were working on, the KMS theme was not something completely new to the children, as they had worked on it for quite a long time. So, the purpose of this activity was to prompt them to choose some of the most important themes and messages and present them in a meaningful way. It is argued that creativity is more likely to occur when learners possess a good understanding of the subject they are working on (Craft, 2005); thus, researchers encourage teachers to make sure that pupils have been involved in gaining 'domain specific knowledge' (Wyse and Spendlove, 2007:183). Having some prior knowledge of the subject could help children to make connections and actively interact with knowledge, ideas and thoughts (Craft, 2005). Indeed, as presented

in the above excerpt, Ava and Alice had built a strong body of knowledge and that prior experience was very important for their collaboration. More specifically, although they hadn't previously planned anything in terms of how to design their poster, when they met and started working together, they managed to co-create a title that captured the essence of the key message they wanted to pass on to people. Thus, Ava and Alice managed to make use of their previous knowledge. As scholars have argued, children are not seen any more as empty vessels that receive and store information, but as active constructors in their own learning (Craft, 2005, Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015). For example, Ava and Alice used their knowledge of dangerous places and situations and visualised their ideas through drawing some possible dangers within the letters of their key title.

As I found the idea of creating the KMS title very interesting, I decided to ask Ava and Alice a few questions about it, in order to understand the thinking behind the drawing.

Krystallia (to both): Why did you draw bricks on the letter K?

Alice: Because bricks fall and this may be dangerous. This poster is about keeping myself safe.

Ava: I designed the letter M like a road. I also drew traffic lights to remind people that they have to stop.

Krystallia (showing the letter S): What are these people doing?

Ava: Sliding down the slide. (Ava is now colouring the letter S.)

Alice: What shall I do? Oh! I will draw a finishing line there!

Alice (when she finished the above): OK, the grass can be a dark colour.

Ava: Yes.

After drawing the grass, they then wanted to draw a sign. Ava wanted the sign to be yellow.

Alice: No, don't do it yellow, cause the letter S is also yellow.

Ava: I can write with red inside.

Alice: Don't do this yellow, because people won't understand. Those signs are usually red. You know, those triangle signs.

Ava: Yes, you are right.

So, Ava draws a red sign with the message 'Be strong' written inside.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 20 May 2015]

The above excerpt is an example of children's hesitancy about taking risks and doing something too different from the norm. 'Don't do this yellow, because people won't understand – those signs are usually red', said Alice, indicating her reluctance to escape from the safety of doing what was ordinary. Children seemed to be flexible and tried to experiment and do something different, but only to a certain degree. This could be

considered a barrier to creativity, since risk-taking is viewed as one of the key factors that foster creativity (Craft, 2003b, Wyse and Spendlove, 2007).

Then, Ava continued the discussion, proposing...

Ava: Let's draw people downstairs. Let's draw a woman, a man, children, a baby, old people, someone in a wheelchair, someone blonde, someone with dark hair, someone with ginger hair. Just to show that we don't judge people.

Alice nodded, indicating that she agreed with Ava's suggestion.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 20 May 2015]

Although previous discussions on the KMS theme hadn't brought up issues of equity, it is worth mentioning that children considered it important to include diverse people (a woman, a man, ... someone with ginger hair) in their poster and to give them a voice. Then, Alice and Ava decided to also add some text on their poster, as presented below:

Alice added a description under the sign 'be strong'. She wrote: 'Be strong and think what's right for you'.

Alice: Ava, what do you think?

Ava: It is OK. You can add: Don't feel pressure to say NO. (Alice added Ava's suggestion.)

Alice: I'll do the writing, you can draw below. (Ava nodded positively.)

Alice: OK, next one is...

Ava: Sharp exit.

Alice: OK, what would you write for that? OK, go, you can write now.

Ava: What should I write?

Alice brought some sample KMS posters that were displayed in the classroom in order to give them some ideas. Alice spotted something on one poster and said to Ava: OK, I will read and you will write.

Alice (reads out loud): Think up an excuse if you need to get yourself out of a situation. (Ava wrote this down on their poster.)

Then, Alice started drawing some more grass, so that the third sign would be de-signed in a similar format to the others.

Ava: Don't do another grass, it is going to be boring.

Alice: That's right. This is the last one. Why don't we do bubbles, clouds...? Something different!

Ava: Yes, we could do bubbles and draw something bad inside. Like abuse or people selling drugs...

Alice: Yes!

Alice drew a person blowing bubbles.

Alice: OK, let's write bad things.

Ava: No, we won't write, we will draw them!

Alice: Yes!

They immediately started drawing 'bad' and unsafe things inside the bubbles.

Ava: I'll do a punch on the face. I'll do a black eye. What else do we do?

Alice: You can do a chat room with computers.

Ava: Oh, yes! I will draw ... (and she sketches two computers).

Alice proposed adding dialogues on the computer screens, to make the danger more obvious. So, Ava added the phrases: 'OK' and 'help me'.

Ava: Any other situations?

Alice: No.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 20 May 2015]

The whole process gave me the feeling that this poster was an outcome of co-construction between Ava and Alice. I had the impression that they were both very focused and that they contributed equally to the brainstorming and creation processes, by 'balancing personal and collective voice' (Chappell, 2007:47). Although some parts of the poster were sketched or written individually, most of the work was co-created, by, for example, proposing to each other ideas and suggestions for improvement, or alternative plans. At first glance, phrases such as 'I will read and you will write' or 'don't do another grass, it is going to be boring' might seem to carry strong hierarchical connotations. However, that didn't seem to be the case with Ava and Alice, as these phrases were apparently contextualised as a form of debate, in which children produced, discussed and, finally, selected the most suitable ideas to display in their poster.

Furthermore, this co-constructive process was permeated with an aura of autonomy, interaction, exploration and gratification. Davis and Smith (2012) show that collaborative work can be very fruitful when the voices of the group members are equally respected within a deeply dialogic and reflexive process of co-construction. Thus, creativity is viewed not only as an individual, but also as a collaborative and collective process that resides in co-participatory frameworks (Craft, 2003a). As Jeffrey and Craft (2004:45) mention, teaching for creativity is linked to the creation of a space in which children enter 'a co-participative process around activities and explorations, posing questions, identifying problems and issues together and debating and discussing their thinking'.

Throughout the poster-creation process, I had the impression that Ava and Alice were travelling through the story they were creating and that the choices they made were purposeful and meaningful to them. 'Learner's inclusiveness' is a term used by Craft and Jeffrey (2004) to describe the process in which learners gain control over their learning,

opening up space for creativity. In a similar vein, creativity is related to ‘freedom to express feelings, emotions, love and inspiration’ (Davis and Smith, 2012:151) and thus to the creation of meaningful experiences fostered by internal motivation (Jeffrey, 2008, Wyse and Spendlove, 2007), aspects that Ava and Alice clearly embodied while creating the KMS poster. Intrinsic motivation is linked to ‘an internal desire to be engaged in a specific activity’ (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016:578) and to the pleasure of learning and it is enhanced when children share their learning with others (Wyse and Dowson, 2009). Furthermore, the whole process of discussions, interactions and self-motivation could also be related to Dewey’s ideas on experience (Dewey, 1938). For Dewey (1938:38), ‘experience is a moving force’ and an enjoyable process that motivates people towards change (Dewey, 2011) and inspires them to connect their experiences with future experiences (Dewey, 1938). The role of interactions has an integral place in Dewey’s theory of experience and he defines education as a social process (Dewey, 1938). Through Dewey’s theoretical prism, Ava and Alice connected previous experiences of KMS with the creation of this poster; their interactions and the atmosphere of enjoyment created an ‘organic connection between education and personal experience’ (Dewey, 1938:25).

Answering research question 2 (on how children’s creativity is experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom), Ava and Alice experienced creativity through collaboration and co-construction by controlling their learning, and by actively interacting with their prior knowledge in an atmosphere of internal motivation, peer-support, encouragement and balance between their personal and collective voice.

Moreover, in Ava’s and Alice’s experience of collaboration, co-construction creativity seemed to be something much larger than the creation of the final poster, and although they created a product (the poster), the mixture of effort and excitement seemed to be more prominent than their relief when they finished creating the poster. This is in line with Dewey’s ideas about positioning art within experience (Dewey, 1934). As he observed:

It is quite possible to enjoy flowers in their coloured form and delicate fragrance without knowing anything about plants theoretically. But if one sets out to under-stand the flowering of plants, he is committed to finding out something about the interactions of soil, air, water and sunlight that condition the growth of plants (Dewey, 1934:2).

In the example of Ava and Alice, the final poster could be aligned with the flower, while soil, air, water and sunlight could be correlated with the interactions and dialogue that shaped the children's experiences. So, it could be argued that the final poster is much more meaningful to the children than it is to an observer, as the children understood and were able to reflect on their experiences while creating it (Dewey, 1938).

Although such examples of experiencing creativity through collaboration and co-construction occurred quite often, this was not always the case; sometimes various types of barriers arose, which made it difficult for children to experience creativity through co-construction and collaboration. The next section explores some of the cultural barriers to creativity that appeared when children were involved in collaborative frameworks.

5.3 How power and diversity created cultural barriers to creativity, instead of acting as productive forces

5.3.1 Barriers to practising co-construction can be overcome by including diverse views and ideas

The previous section explored the concept of experiencing creativity through collaboration and co-construction. However, embedding creativity whilst practising collaboration and co-construction was not always easy; children are not a homogeneous group and sometimes respecting, valuing and using ideas from diverse people is difficult. As scholars remind us, collaboration is not merely a process of being with others, but involves the crucial point of acknowledging and embracing complexity and diversity within co-constructive and participatory frameworks (Davis and Smith, 2012). Such approaches are very critical of viewing children as a homogeneous group and bring the diversities of childhood to the fore within co-constructive learning (Tisdall, 2012). Alastair and Rhiana acknowledging that children are different and have varied ideas, presented ways to overcome difficulties and create meaningful collective moments for everybody, as described below:

Krystallia: When you work in a group and you have a really good idea and someone has a really good idea too... what happens then?

Alastair: Well, you look at what's good about the idea the person has. Maybe if they've got like...like...if they've thought like this, like say just a random part of the idea, then maybe you could take the good part of their idea and put it into one idea, then go to another person and see what's good about their idea and then take that part and put it in.

Krystallia: And who manages which part of the ideas you will use?

Alastair: Usually the whole group, like, will look at one person's idea and will think: alright, what's good about this? Say we were doing like a Maths poster you could say oh they've got a really good idea for a game we could use on our poster. So we'll take that from their idea and put it on the poster. Now what was good about this person was like they thought about like a quiz that we have, so we can put that on and then someone might have good information, someone might have a creative title...

[Interview with Alastair, 08 June 2015]

Alastair mentioned the importance of using parts of everyone's ideas and, thus, promoted an inclusive approach to collaborative work. He also indicated that it is the whole group that manages which ideas or parts of ideas to choose. In a similar vein, Rhiana paid attention to the importance of willingness to compromise and of being open, an approach that helps children gain new insights through paying attention to other people's ideas.

Krystallia: How does this group work in practice? For example, what do you do if many people have a lot of great ideas? How do you manage that?

Rhiana: Well, if two people in the group have lots of good ideas, they can put their ideas together because it's most likely that most of the ideas will be the same. So if you've got a group, say, you've got a group of your friends and you've all got really good ideas you could go and do that and then include most of your ideas and most of their ideas so...it's not like you can do anything, I'm just gonna do my ideas. You've got to compromise, you say, well you'll pick two of your ideas now I'll pick two of my ideas. Or if you've got really good ideas and you think 'oh I really want to do that', but then you hear other people's ideas you might think 'oh, I should have thought about that, that's a good idea, let's do that'.

[Interview with Rhiana, 08 June 2015]

Both the above examples emphasised the importance of involving the whole group in the decision-making process. Moreover, Alastair's and Rhiana's responses described decision-making as an inclusive activity, in which everyone is engaged in the thought-production process (Burnard, 2011). As Alastair mentioned, '...you could take the good part of their idea and put it into one idea, then go to another person and see what's good about their idea and then take that part and put it in'. Moreover, Alastair and Rhiana seemed to perceive collaboration as a process of 'mutual respect, dialogue and flexibility' (Craft et al., 2014). As Rhiana's words illustrated, 'you've got to compromise, you say,

well, you'll pick two of your ideas now I'll pick two of my ideas (...). Or if you've got really good ideas and you think "oh I really want to do that", but then you hear other people's ideas you might think "oh, I should have thought about that, that's a good idea, let's do that". Rhiana's quote emphasised the importance of respecting other people's views, of being able to compromise and of being ready to accept different ideas from your own, if necessary.

Section 5.2 explored research question 2, on how children's creativity is experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom. The analysis of the data in this section showed that embracing diversity and children's varied views and ideas is a crucial part of the collaborative and creative process. More specifically, diversity was viewed by the children as an opportunity to be critical of their own ideas, to learn from others and co-create a more vibrant and robust outcome by focusing on the creative process through dialogue and mutual respect.

However, practising collaboration and co-construction was not always as ideal, inclusive and dynamic a process as many children, including Alastair and Rhiana, presented it. As we will see in Section 5.3.8 of this chapter, Alastair himself was involved in relationships where not all children were able to equally contribute their ideas and take decisions. Although most children articulated similar understandings to those of Alastair and Rhiana, some children provided more critical views. For example, when asked about working with others, Hassan expressed concerns about the capacity of children to make equal contributions in collaborative work, especially for introverted and shy children like himself. As he mentioned to me, 'sometimes I feel quite shy because everybody is talking at the same time and everybody has so many ideas and we don't sometimes agree with them' [Interview with Hassan, 03 June 2015]. Additional difficulties that children faced when trying to practice collaborative work are discussed in the following sections of this chapter. The next section presents one of the barriers to experiencing creativity through collaboration, namely viewing collaboration as an amalgamation of separate, individual tasks.

5.3.2 Collaboration was sometimes performed as an accumulation of individual tasks

Children would often decide to undertake different roles and manage different tasks and responsibilities as part of collaborative work. Examples of the variety of these tasks included spelling, drawing, writing, organising the tasks, using the iPad, acting and filming. Children sometimes divided responsibilities in order to finish a task more quickly, and at other times to use each one's strengths to make a task look better. These individual tasks were usually allocated by the children themselves; sometimes children would pick the task they preferred, but at other times they would follow the suggestion of the child who coordinated the group (often one who belonged to the highest ability level). This process sometimes led children to perceive collaborative work as a synthesis of individual tasks that did not involve any elements of collaboration and co-construction, as mentioned in the example below:

Krystallia: Let's imagine that you could work on a poster with children from your classroom and with children from various age groups. When do you think you would feel more creative?

Tariq: Anytime!

Krystallia: Aha...

Tariq: Yeah, if we are making a poster... Because we would do different parts. Somebody would do the drawing, somebody will be doing the colouring and somebody will be collecting the information. Then we will create a really good poster.

[Interview with Tariq, 02 June 2015]

As Tariq explained in the above excerpt, '...we would do different parts. Somebody would do the drawing, somebody will be doing the colouring and somebody will be collecting information'. Tariq's discourse emphasised a collection of individual tasks, through which everybody would be able to work on a different part of the project. The concept of creativity as an individual trait has been supported by many scholars. For example, Torrance introduced psychometric tests for measuring individual creativity (Wyse and Spendlove, 2007, Burnard, 2011). In a similar vein, Gardner (1993) placed creativity within the framework of multiple intelligences, mentioning that creativity is even broader than intelligence, since it entails personality factors. This view is shared by other scholars in the field of creativity, such as Prentice (2000), whose research focuses on early childhood education. As Banaji (2011) explained, Gardner's approach perceives creativity as something that takes place in individuals' minds and is not associated with the social or

cultural context in which the individuals are placed. However, supporters of individual creativity do not always agree with dominant definitions (e.g. Gardner's, 1993). For example, from a philosophical point of view, Gaut (2009, 2010) rejects the association of personality characteristics with creativity and emphasises mainly the originality and value of the final product.

As explained in the previous paragraph, Tariq valued the importance of dividing responsibilities among different people. For him, individual work was important for creating a better poster, that is, a better outcome, and the quality of the final product was what Tariq would define as creative. Writing about possible barriers to creativity, Wyse (2013) highlighted the danger of placing creativity within a system of top-down control that pays attention to the quality of the output-product. Furthermore, product-based approaches to creativity have been linked to plans for boosting the economy within a neoliberal framework (Munday, 2014, Hakala et al., 2015, Galman, 2015), making school a 'results factory', as Munday (2014:325) illustrates. This danger was also pinpointed by Dewey (1929/1964:88, mentioned in Jones, 2011:22), who argued that 'the desire for private profit' made it unlikely that 'the ideals of educational reformers [could] be carried into operation'. Additionally, drawing on sociocultural theories, researchers on creativity argued that the ways in which global educational environments are shaped within a neoliberal economy 'minimise, if not outright exclude, difference, diversity and, consequently, creativity itself' (Glaveanu et al., 2015:360).

This section has reflected on research question 3 (What are the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity?). It is argued that children's experiences and, therefore, the dominant cultures in schools, are influenced by the structural norms of the schools (Davis and Watson, 2001) through interactions and internalisation of 'habits' (Connolly, 2003b). This section highlighted a tendency towards practices of individualisation of education, in which the individual's progress and development is considered to be far more important than collective endeavours and practices (Skelton, 2010, Skelton and Francis, 2011). Thus, cultural barriers to creativity may emerge when the structures put considerable pressure on individuals in terms of the quality of the outcomes, instead of paying attention to embedding creativity within collaborative and co-constructive frameworks.

The next section presents cultural barriers that are linked to the teacher's intervention in children's collaborative and co-constructive work. In line with the arguments of this section, the teacher's intervention did not focus on children's collective work, but on the quality of the final outcome.

5.3.3 Top-down teacher's interventions may create barriers to creativity

This section draws on Ava's and Alice's collaborative work on the 'Keeping Myself Safe' project. Section 5.2.3 presented and analysed most of the interaction between Ava and Alice during the creation of the KMS poster. However, this was not the whole story, as the teacher was also involved and influenced the process, as is illustrated in the excerpt below.

While Ava and Alice were working on the KMS poster, the teacher (Juliet) approached them and examined their poster. She said that they had to make clear what this poster was about. Ava and Alice nodded, agreeing with this suggestion.

Juliet: You are running out of space that is why I am saying it. (She said that and then she left.)

The children paused and remained silent for a bit.

Ava: OK, I'll do this. I'll draw a brown bubble. (She looked disappointed.)

Ava drew a bubble on the top right corner and wrote the following message inside it: 'These are some strategies to stop situations like these happening to you. You need to...keep yourself safe'.

Ava and Alice started working faster and lost the focus that they previously seemed to have.

Alice: OK, what is going to be the last one?

Alice proposed that they could draw two girls and someone talking to them asking to go shopping together, persuading the girls to follow him.

Ava: Let's do the one that we did the other day.

Alice: OK.

Ava drew a scene from a scenario that took place on a bus, which had previously been discussed in the classroom.

Finally, Alice drew two boys. One of them was sitting next to a wall and the other boy was saying something to the other.

Krystallia: What is that, Alice?

Alice: That's him against the wall. And the other boy tells horrible things to him. That is bullying, so I am going to do this. (And she draws a big red X on this picture.)

Ava: Do you want to put a cloud or something on the space we've got left?

Alice: Yes, but we can have something in it, like write something.

Ava drew a cloud and Alice wrote in it: The ones with the crosses are the ones that can get you into trouble.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 20 May 2015]

The above excerpt shows how the teacher's involvement influenced Ava's and Alice's collaborative process. Before Juliet's intervention, Ava and Alice were focused on their work and immersed in co-creation. Juliet's intervention did not involve dialogue with the children, but only criticism, which was expressed in the following sentences: 'You have to make clear what this poster is about' and 'You are running out of space'. Ava and Alice seemed to be disappointed that the teacher did not support their effort (Chappell, 2007). Although the children decided to follow their teacher's suggestion, this was done in a mechanistic way. 'Let's do the one that we did the other day', said Ava, showing her unwillingness to put more effort into that poster, but also trying to avoid doing something too different from what had been presented in the classroom and which might again be criticised by the teacher.

The interaction between Juliet and the children appeared to reflect a top-down approach, whereby children followed the adult's command which restrained their creative flow (Davis, 2013). Discussing promotion of children's creativity in early childhood education in Jordan, Dababneh (2010:1182) concluded that practices such as 'avoiding students' ideas, not being tolerant to mistakes, believing that there is one correct answer...' restrain children's creativity. Similarly, Craft (2005) suggested that the process of idea-production within a group should not be disturbed by externals, because this might block people's creativity. Answering research question 3 of this study, cultural issues/barriers that emerge during processes of childhood creativity are also linked to adults' rigid and unreflective approaches, which aim to correct and regulate children's work, instead of valuing the diverse views and ideas that emerge and travel through their processes of collaboration and co-creation. The next section sheds more light on regulative approaches, but this time the ones who regulate children's work are their peers.

5.3.4 How different ways of being a boy influence boys' power relations and creativity

This section draws on Jack's interaction with Jonathan, Arisha and Fatima. All of them were creating individual posters. Jack was working on his own poster, drawing a picture on the front page. He drew some green space at the bottom (grass), blue at the top of the

page (sky), and nothing in the space between the grass and the sky. Jonathan was watching and intervened, as presented below:

Jonathan: Jack, you need to fill in the rest. The sky doesn't stop!

Jack: The blue is up on the sky, this is just here (showing the 'sky', represented with blue colour).

Jonathan: Is that fog? (pointing at the white space)

Jack: No, it isn't (Jack had a questioning and puzzled expression in his face).

Jonathan did not make any further comments, but the following moments were shadowed by an 'awkward silence'. After a while, Jack started filling in the white space with blue colour.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 3 June 2015]

In the above excerpt, Jack's attempt to draw a landscape was interrupted by Jonathan's intervention. Jonathan provided feedback and proposed some changes to Jack's drawing, based on how 'sky' is normally observed by people and how this should be portrayed in drawings. As a result, this type of intervention seemed to block Jack's creativity, since he stopped experimenting and complied with Jonathan's instruction (Craft et al., 2014). Jonathan's approach is also an example of children acting like adults by judging things according to specific criteria and, therefore, practicing exclusion.

Overall, Jonathan seemed to be able to influence Jack; this was not only caused by Jonathan's adult-like comments. An overview of the two boys' dominant characteristics would, therefore, be useful for understanding what influenced the power relations between them. Jonathan and Jack were friends, but they both preferred to work on their own instead of being part of a team. They were both white Scottish and Jack was much taller than Jonathan. They both belonged in the middle ability level (hot) and their academic performance was similar. Jack was introverted and shy, whilst Jonathan seemed more confident and was very organised, focused and self-disciplined in his work. Jonathan and Jack used different methods to 'do' gender (Connolly, 2003a). Although neither of the two ways could be described with the term 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2005), which is mostly associated with boys' roughness (Konstantoni, 2011), Jonathan's approach stressed 'position and hierarchy' (Thorne, 1993:95), which is usually spotted in boys' 'existing gender arrangements' (Thorne, 1993:2). This ties in with literature which demonstrates that there are different ways of being a boy, in turn influencing power relations between them (Connell, 2005, Konstantoni, 2011, Connolly, 2004).

This section has reflected on research question 3 of this study (on cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity). The analysis of the interaction between two boys showed that the different ways of being a boy and of ‘doing’ gender influenced the power relations between them and created a culture of exclusion. Therefore, cultural issues that may emerge when trying to implement creativity in practice are also linked to exclusionary practices generated through power relations between boys who express their masculinity in different ways.

Children’s self or hetero compliance to rules and regulatory standards was also closely linked to children’s high achievement and to the production of good quality products. Thus, children with better academic performance were usually the ones who gained the highest status among their peers, as described in the section below.

5.3.5 Academic ability and the production of power in groups of children

Each classroom of ‘Little-Valley’ primary school was given the responsibility to prepare an exhibition about one country from around the world (the country chosen by the teacher). Among the activities for that exhibition in this P7 class was the creation of a group leaflet advertising Canada. There would also be a competition and the best leaflet would win a prize. The teacher explained the purpose of the activity, gave some guidelines and emphasised the importance of everybody’s involvement in group work. She also proposed that children should think before they plan (e.g. which area will they choose to advertise / thoughts about the budget needed etc.) and prompted them to use persuasive techniques. So, the teacher did not provide extensive guidance to the children, but encouraged them to take advantage of the flexibility that was offered. In the following example, four children were working together on the creation of that leaflet. They were: Arisha, Fatima, Jonathan and Jack.

During her explanation on how to design this leaflet, Juliet (the teacher) folded a piece of paper in a certain way. Arisha proposed to the group that they should use the teacher’s technique to fold up the paper. She also said they could write down Canada’s top 5 things-to-do on the left-hand side, draw some pictures in the middle and write down Saskatchewan’s top 5 on the right-hand side. Fatima suggested that instead of having bullet points, they could draw tiny maple leaves.

Jack: How can we draw this so many times? This is going to be so difficult!

Since the beginning of these children's collaborative work, Jonathan was trying to fold a piece of paper in different ways. He found one way of folding the paper that he liked a lot and he displayed his idea to the group. The others didn't agree, especially Arisha, who said that this idea was very difficult and confusing.

Alice was walking by and Jonathan asked her to have a look at his idea.

Jonathan: Alice, this is MY (emphasising my) idea, but the others go for the teacher's idea!

Arisha: We don't want a confusing idea; we want something basic (her tone was imperative and assertive).

Jack (to Jonathan): When the teacher gives you an idea, the best you can do is to follow their idea!

Arisha (giving directions): Jack, draw a door.

Jack draws a door on the front page.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 3 June 2015]

This group consisted of two dyads of friends: Arisha-Fatima and Jonathan-Jack. Arisha and Fatima had brown skin, black hair and South-Asian racial characteristics, and they both were as fluent in English as native speakers. Arisha and Fatima were very close friends. Arisha seemed to be quite confident, whilst Fatima was usually quieter. Jonathan and Jack were both white Scots; although they were close friends, they both preferred to work individually at most tasks and were both quite introverted, with the difference that Jack seemed shy but Jonathan seemed confident and energetic. Within this group of four, Fatima was the quietest child; after one of her ideas was rejected, she remained silent for the remaining time, waiting for others to take decisions without her contribution. Jack made a few suggestions, but he was also trying to make sure that these suggestions were in accordance with Arisha's preferences (usually repeating her suggestions in different words). Jonathan undertook a more autonomous role, at least in the beginning. He experimented and tried to persuade his team to do something extraordinary. However, his ideas were not accepted by the group and this made him feel disappointed. Arisha seemed to exercise more power within this group. She spoke very calmly, but the way she phrased her arguments, along with her body language, indicated that she was controlling the process, something that the other children seemed to accept.

Arisha's 'high' academic performance and her stance of acting as an adult in relation to the other members of the group seemed to justify her dominant position in it. As mentioned in the above excerpt, Arisha proposed using the teacher's technique to fold the paper, and through this action she seemed to construct herself and her position as 'equal' to the teacher and to assume the 'privileged habitus' of an adult (Reay, 1995:364). Furthermore,

Arisha did not want to promote ideas that were not aligned with the teacher's suggestions and, as shown in the above excerpt, she would describe these ideas as difficult and confusing.

Answering research question 3 of this study, on the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity, the data showed that power in groups of children seemed to accrue to the very academic children. Thus, children's participation was not a co-constructive process (Davis and Smith, 2012, Craft, 2003a), as some children were able to play a much more active and decisive role and unequal power dynamics seemed to restrain children's control over their preferred level of participation in collaborative creativity. Furthermore, the atmosphere did not seem to encourage risk-taking (Craft, 2003b, Wyse and Spendlove, 2007), as children preferred to stick to practices that were familiar to them and were aligned with the teacher's advice. Children's reluctance and fear of taking risks has been described as one of the barriers to creativity (Wyse and Dowson, 2009).

5.3.6 The importance of the social context for the way children's academic performance affected their experiences of disability and creativity

Academic performance seemed to play a very important role in influencing power relations between children, as described in the example below. The children involved in the following example are: Alice and Ava, who were best friends and used to work together very often, and Ewan1, who used to work alone or with the guidance of a support teacher, since most of the aims he had to cover were individualised and he was following an IEP (Individualised Educational Programme).

In the lobby outside the classroom, Alice, Ava and Ewan1 were filming a video containing an advertisement prompting people to visit Canada. When I joined them, they had already filmed most of it. They asked for my help with the rest of it and I was happy to help them by holding the iPad and filming the scene. Ava and Alice gave me instructions about the practicalities of filming them. The idea was that Ava and Alice would discuss visiting Canada for a holiday, while sitting in front of a TV screen. Ewan1 would be sitting behind the screen and would be the TV reporter. Ava and Alice were trying to find an object that could be used as a TV screen. So, they (Ava and Alice) found a piece of a carton, placed a piece of paper on it and drew a TV screen. Ewan1 was sitting on a chair in the back corner and didn't participate. The girls set everything up and

explained to Ewan1 what he had to do. Ewan1 just nodded and remained silent. Everyone took their positions and I started filming. Ewan1 was hidden behind the carton and acted as the TV reporter. However, his voice was very low and the girls didn't like that. While they were acting, the door opened and one child (a boy, a non-participant in my research) appeared. Alice asked for his help, asking him to take Ewan1's position as a reporter, explaining that Ewan1 had a very low voice. The boy agreed to do that and Ewan1 sat again on a chair behind the girls. Ewan1 didn't say anything, but his silence was perceived as agreement by Alice and Ava. The movie was finally filmed without Ewan1's contribution.
[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 9 June 2015]

The drama activity in which children were involved in the above excerpt provided opportunities for connecting learning to real-world problem-solving (Wiggins, 2011) and a space for exploration and imagination (Hui et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is argued that the use of drama promotes creativity because it helps people navigate through 'flexible and less hierarchical uses of space' (Neelands, 2011). However, the use of drama in the aforementioned excerpt did not create opportunities for exploration and flexibility for every child; as mentioned, Ewan1 was excluded from the group and, therefore, did not have a chance to be involved in flexible practices of exploration and co-creation.

Valuing children's diversities (Glaveanu et al., 2015) and including every child's views by 'allowing children to offer their own imaginings' and incorporating these ideas into everyday teaching practices (Thomson and Hall, 2015:429) have been described as key characteristics of pedagogies that set the stage for fostering children's creativity. However, as presented in the above example, not every child was able to have his/her views and ideas heard and, thus, creativity was not experienced to the same extent by all group members. Indeed, Ewan1 was not asked to participate in the preparation process and when he was asked to participate, he had to follow guidelines set by the girls, before being completely excluded. Therefore, Ewan1 seemed to be the victim of 'cultural oppression' (Davis and Watson, 2002:161) within this group, being seen as 'the other' (Davis and Watson, 2001). He seemed to be excluded because of his low voice, but the overall impression given by the above excerpt shows that this was not the only factor that led to Ewan1's exclusion. His disability and 'poor' academic performance seemed to have created power relations that enforced cultures of exclusion among children. As scholars argue, victimisation is not an uncommon phenomenon in the daily lives and experiences of disabled people (Vlachou and Papananou, 2015). Additionally, placing disability under

the umbrella of post-structuralism, Corker and Shakespeare (2002) explain that the social context and people's relationships and interactions within this context are of crucial importance for the way they act towards and experience disability. In the same vein, Connolly (2004, 2003b), paraphrasing Bourdieu (1977, 1990), argued that individuals are interconnected with the social environment and their actions and behaviour are based on the habitus they have internalised. Therefore, Ewan1's experiences of disability might have been different if, for example, Alice and Ava had included his views from the very first stages of their collaboration and had discussed how to include Ewan1's abilities and strengths in the co-creative process, instead of paying attention to the elements that Ewan1 found difficult and thus enforcing a culture of exclusion.

However, it is important to acknowledge that not every child with a disability and 'poorer' academic performance was oppressed and experienced barriers to creativity. For example, Ewan2, an autistic child, would usually resist oppressive behaviours towards him in an acute way (in contrast with Ewan1's silent obedience), which showed the heterogeneity of disabled people's experiences (Davis and Watson, 2002). Ewan2 seemed to be confident in working independently and did not pay attention to how other children performed academically. Similarly, children seemed to respect Ewan2's choice of working alone and his need of having an individualised learning plan, and this did not seem to affect the power relations between Ewan2 and other children. In Ewan2's case, recognition of diversity required a more autonomous approach in the case of the child, so teacher and children alike had to be flexible. Usually, the teacher would come up with some suggestions and Ewan2 would add variations that reflected his interests. For example, when the whole class was working on a project about Canada, Ewan2 chose to do a project on Japan, a country he wanted to learn more about. The teacher's actions were of great importance for how Ewan2 experienced his disability. As Davis and Watson (2000:213) put it:

'Disabled children can be competent participants in everyday decision-making processes when they are provided with opportunities to interact with other children on an equitable basis, their participation is properly planned and not reliant on short term adult assessments of competency, and when they are able to work with reflexive adults.'

Overall, Ewan2 was very much involved in the creation of his weekly schedule in contrast with the rest of the children, who lacked the chance to co-create their weekly aims and, as a result, followed the teacher's suggestions. Such opportunities for autonomy and choice that were provided only to Ewan2 might have influenced his positioning within the group of children; his academic performance could not be directly compared with that of the rest of the children, as he was working on differentiated tasks and also had the privilege of greater autonomy in his learning. Therefore, Ewan2's academic performance did not create evident barriers to his way of experiencing creativity.

Answering research question 3, cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity are linked to children's academic ability and to how they perform and experience their disability. Although children's experiences were diverse, academic ability did play a very important role in how children formed power relations and cultures of exclusion. In Ewan1's case, academic ability led to his exclusion from the group. Being excluded from a group because of his academic ability was not uncommon for Ewan1. Since his academically related 'markers of success' had been proved inaccessible (Benjamin, 2003:103), he would find elements of confidence in playing football with other boys. Football was described by Ewan1 as the most creative thing in primary school. Therefore, feeling included and successful is important for children to be able to experience creativity. Combining the examples of Ewan1 and Ewan2, this study suggests that developing an approach that focuses on every child's abilities and uses their strengths is important for creating a social context in which children will be able to perform and experience creativity regardless of differences related to disability and academic ability.

The next section presents an additional example related to children's academic ability and the power relations among them. Again, as illustrated below, power did accrue to the very academic children, but it was perceived as a productive rather than oppressive force (as happened, for example, in Ewan1's case).

5.3.7 Collaboration between children belonging to different ability groups: an example of power being viewed as a productive force within relationships

Children were mostly working with children at the same level as themselves. An exception is the example given below, in which Isa (who belonged to the extra-hot level: the highest one) was working with Rory (who belonged to the mild level: the lowest one) in order to create a collaborative poster for the KMS project (the same activity on Keeping Myself Safe that was described in section 5.2.3). Also, children mostly preferred to work with others who shared common characteristics with them, in terms of gender, race and academic ability. Academic ability usually influenced children's power relations by creating cultures of exclusion, but this was not always the case, as illustrated in the excerpt below:

While I was sitting with Ava and Alice, I heard the teacher talking to Rory, Jack and Isa. The teacher told them: 'If this is your task, it has to be a learning task, not a colouring task. You need to be able to explain to me in the end what you have contributed to it and what you have learned'.

As Ava and Alice had finished their poster, I decided to go and sit with Isa, Rory and Jack. This group was also working on the KMS poster. When I approached them they had already started working on that. Rory and Isa were working together on this poster. Jack was sitting next to them, but he was working on something different.

Rory: What else?

Isa: Peer pressure.

Rory: Oh, I like that!

Isa drew a box and wrote the title 'peer pressure' on the top of the page.

Rory: Is that information?

Isa: Yes, write.

Rory: Should I do bullets?

Isa: No, just write.

Isa told Rory what to write. Rory followed her instructions and occasionally asked questions about the spelling of some words.

Isa: OK, I'll do the next sentence. (She wrote down something without discussing this with Rory or asking his opinion.) Next one. (She gave him the pen.)

Isa: Even.

Rory: How do I write?

Isa: E-v-e-n (she orally spelled the word).

Isa left the group, went to the back of the classroom and had a look at the sample posters that the teacher had put on the wall to provide some guidance and inspiration to the children.

Isa (after a while... Rory was waiting for Isa to come back): OK, let's do a 'sharp exit' and 'be strong'. (She wrote down one sentence.) OK, you do the last sentence, which is: 'Stick at it'.

Rory wrote that sentence down.

Isa: OK, let's draw. What else?

Rory: We could do...know who to trust?

Isa: Yes, go into someone's car basically?

Rory: Yes.

Isa grabbed the pen from Rory's hands and drew another box with the title 'know who to trust' at the top.

Isa: I will do bullets. (She drew the first one, which was: 'never get into a stranger's car'.)

Jack was working on something different, but he heard Isa's suggestion for the last sentence. So, Jack said: Never, unless they know them?

Isa and Rory agreed.

Isa (after she had finished writing the bullet points): OK, that's good. Let's draw a car.

Rory: Should we do a cigarette or something?

Isa: Yes.

Rory started drawing a cigarette.

Isa: That's good. Draw it down there and draw smoke coming out. (She erased the initial drawing that Rory had done.)

Rory: OK. (He followed Isa's advice and drew a bigger cigarette.)

Isa: I'll draw some drugs. What goes with brown?

Rory: Green?

They continued drawing. They asked my opinion about the colours and I told them that they could use colours of their own choice, but they preferred to colour everything as it is in reality. So, they brought an iPad and searched the exact colour of cigarettes.

Isa: Rory, I think we are done.

Rory: Are we done?

Isa: Yes.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 20 May 2015]

The above excerpt illustrated how children from different levels collaborated to create a poster together. Isa usually worked with Ava and Alice, but the three of them sometimes collaborated with Rory. Rory was quite close to Ewan2 as a friend and was sometimes grouped with children with additional support needs (Ewan1 and Ewan2) and worked with a support teacher. Rory was not described as having additional support needs, but usually received negative comments about his lack of focus. He was the shortest boy in this classroom and seemed very keen to demonstrate his masculinity (Connell, 2005, Connolly, 2004). Rory would often try to grab people's attention, by being loud or making jokes and he really seemed to enjoy it when people noticed or listened to him.

In this excerpt, Rory seemed to enjoy working with Isa. Sometimes Isa sounded quite imperative. ‘Yes, write’, ‘No, just write’, ‘OK, you do the last sentence, which is: “stick at it”’, were some of Isa’s powerful phrases. Although Isa seemed to control the process when collaborating with Rory, Rory also made some contributions. Sometimes, Isa prompted him to contribute: ‘Isa: OK, let’s draw. What else?’ / ‘Rory: We could do...know who to trust?’ At other times, especially by the end of the process, Rory seemed to contribute more and more to the discussion and also made his own suggestions, such as: ‘Should we draw a cigarette or something?’ Rory’s increasing involvement was also reinforced by Isa’s positive and encouraging comments. In addition to her positive comments, Isa gave Rory suggestions for improvement. For example, her encouraging comment on Rory’s idea about the cigarette was followed by her action of erasing Rory’s drawing and suggesting the creation of a bigger one. This did not seem to annoy Rory, who seemed pretty confident and happy.

Interactions between children as part of collaborative work usually fostered their motivation and made them feel happy and satisfied with the learning process. The importance of social interactions was mentioned in post-Vygotskian activity theory (Daniels, 2001) and also in the Vygotskian theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978b). However, the focus of these theories was mostly linked to children’s individual development and agency (Daniels, 2001, Littleton, 2000, Vygotsky, 1978b). Critiques include the point that the Vygotskian framework did not capture the complexity of the issue beyond the individual level and ‘how their actual thoughts and behaviour are influenced and shaped by the broader social and cultural contexts around them’ (Connolly, 2004:81). In the case of Isa and Rory, their interactions and collaborative process had also been influenced by the wider context and social structures and by all the meanings they had internalised, such as the flexibility provided by the teacher and the curriculum that encouraged children to work collaboratively and co-constructively.

The positive influence of social interactions on people’s creativity has been argued by studies on creativity (see Davis et al., 2011, Davis, 2013). During the time I was observing Isa and Rory, I didn’t have the impression that Rory was feeling dominated or oppressed. Instead, he seemed to enjoy the process and to gain considerable experience from it. It is mentioned that sometimes teachers use girls to ‘control deviant boys’ (Reay, 2003:155), but in this case it was the children’s own decision to work together. So, the power between

Isa and Rory, seemed to be exercised ‘in the interplay of mobile relations’ (Foucault, 1978:94) and did not function as an oppressive force. Instead, as Gallagher (2008b:147) explains, paraphrasing Foucault (1994), ‘power is productive...power is dangerous, but it is also full of possibilities, the instrument both of oppression and of liberation’. Therefore, the effects of power in Isa’s and Rory’s collaborative relationship generated a productive ambience, in which each child contributed to the creative process with their own means and to the degree that they felt comfortable with.

By the end of the collaborative work with Isa, Rory went to the area of the boxes and completed a ‘yes’ paper signed with his name. That was the first time that Rory used the boxes and the fact that he chose to emphasise the ‘yes’ option following this specific occasion (and not following other times when I was paying attention to him), made me think that he regarded this moment as an extraordinary and important one for him; a moment when he had positive feelings about his work and a moment that he wanted me to pay attention to.

This section has reflected on research question 2 of this study (How is children’s creativity experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom?). Drawing on the presented example of collaboration between a girl who belonged to the ‘high’ ability level and a boy who belonged to the lowest ability level, the analysis of the data showed that, although the child with the higher academic performance was more powerful, this power did not act as an oppressive force. Isa’s more dominant position acted as a motivating force for Rory, who seemed to feel successful because of being able to work with a person of strong academic performance. Rory loved being observed and on this occasion he was observed by me (adult researcher) while working with one of the most ‘successful’ (in terms of academic ability and confidence) girls in his classroom. Rory really liked showing off to girls and seemed to be proud when he caught their attention. Therefore, this is an example of children’s power relations within collaborative work acting not as a barrier to creativity, but, instead, enabling children to contribute with their own means, build up confidence and experience creativity through practices of support and rapport.

The next section presents an example in which children’s power relations between two different groups of friends created cultures of exclusion.

5.3.8 How categories of friendship, gender, 'race' and emotions intersect and create cultures of exclusion

Although academic ability was a very important factor affecting children's power relations, other factors seemed also to play an important role. In the example given below, all children belonged to the same, middle ability level (hot level; the three ability levels being mild, hot and extra hot) and achieved similar academic performances. However, children did not contribute equally to the collaborative process, as shown in the excerpt below:

Children had to create a poster, on the theme 'the world of Maths'. The aim was to find jobs that involve Maths and display these jobs on a poster. Juliet (the teacher) announced that children would be able to work in a different space outside the classroom; this space would be the corridor outside the P1 classrooms. The group consisted of Hassan, Tariq, Alastair, Harry and Calum. Tariq and Hassan were added to that group by the teacher. When they found a place to sit, Calum and Harry started talking about things such as their favourite songs and about a future school trip. They weren't interrupted by anyone else, so, they didn't start planning their poster immediately. After some time, Calum stopped his previous conversation and proposed that they could divide different jobs into categories that would involve loads of Maths and other categories that would involve less Maths. Then, the discussion went as follows;

Harry: Are there any jobs that do not use Maths?

Alastair: Bin collectors.

Harry: No, they use Maths. They calculate how many bins they have collected.

Calum: Firefighters?

Harry: They also use Maths!

Calum (to Alastair): Just write down: Some jobs include a little bit of Maths.

Alastair was the person who was writing down the group's ideas. Calum and Harry were leading the discussion and Hassan and Tariq were completely silent for most of the time.

We were sitting at a round table next to each other in the following order (from the left to the right): Calum, Harry, Alastair, me, Tariq and Hassan.

Harry suggested that they could make a quiz related to their poster. He suggested that they could add some envelopes with questions like: 'How much Maths does this job involve?', so that the people could choose between options like 'a lot', 'a little bit' and 'not at all'.

Calum: Oh yes, a quiz!!! (He seemed to be very excited about this idea.)

Alastair suggested that they could also have a little box with questions inside.

Hassan was trying to propose an idea, but the other children didn't pay attention to what he was trying to say. So, Hassan mentioned his idea to Tariq.

After Hassan talked to Tariq, Tariq said (to all children): ‘What do you do if you don’t know any Maths?’

Alastair: Some jobs may not need so much Maths.

Alastair gave the paper (in which he was writing down the children’s suggestions) to Calum, saying: ‘You will write, Calum’.

Calum: Hassan, you will write (he also made a compliment about Hassan’s hand-writing). Hassan grabbed the paper and started writing down the group’s ideas.

Calum and Tariq made some suggestions, but no one responded to Tariq’s idea. Then, Calum grabbed the paper and pen from Hassan without negotiating this with the team. Calum decided that he would continue to write things down. After this moment, Hassan and Tariq stopped paying attention to what was discussed. They didn’t seem to be willing to participate and they spent the rest of the time being silent and playing with their pens and rubbers.

After a while Harry said: ‘Hassan and Tariq, you haven’t done anything!’ Tariq repeated his idea and he told them that this was his contribution to the group.

Alastair: No...just no!

Calum said that Hassan and Tariq might need to create their own poster, because they hadn’t contributed any ideas for this one. Hassan and Tariq remained silent.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 6 May 2015]

As presented in the above excerpt, Calum seemed to control the process within a hierarchically organised group of boys (Thorne, 1993). The group work only started when Calum decided to start discussing the project. He seemed to control the activity more than all the others and this was documented by the confidence he displayed, by his comments: ‘Just write down’, and by his actions (he started off the dialogue, he assigned responsibilities to the group members and he decided that Tariq and Hassan should create a different poster). However, apart from hierarchical relationships among the boys, there were also incidents of exclusion. For example, Hassan’s and Tariq’s suggestions were ignored and, despite their efforts to contribute to the discussion, their presence was not welcomed by the rest of the boys. As a result, Hassan and Tariq stopped trying to fit in and remained silent and wistful, only to be informed of Calum’s statement (that they should create their own poster) which set clear boundaries between the two sub-groups of boys.

To understand why such cultures of exclusion were created among children it will be useful to examine children’s identities more closely. Hassan and Tariq were close friends who worked together on most of the school tasks. They were both quiet and seemed to

understand each other well. For example, on occasions when one of them was feeling uncomfortable and did not want to collaborate with others on a task, the other person would understand and respect his friend's choice and preference. Hassan and Tariq were both quite short in comparison with other boys and they had brown skin and black hair (South-Asian racial characteristics). Calum, Harry and Alastair were also close friends, but they were louder and rougher than Hassan and Tariq. For example, they would usually speak loudly both inside and outside the classroom, and they would control large spaces by moving around and chatting loudly. In contrast, Hassan and Tariq would work silently or speak very softly and would not move around, but remain quietly in the same spot until they finished their work. Calum, Harry and Alastair were white British. Discussing gender play, Thorne (1993:94) described cliques of boys and mentioned that boys usually form 'larger, hierarchical groups', which seemed to be the case with the friendship among Calum, Harry and Alastair. On the other hand, the friendship of Tariq and Hassan seemed to resemble girls' friendships more closely, possessing characteristics used to describe these friendships, such as: 'small groups that typically girls form pairs of best friends' (Thorne, 1993:94) and the 'construction of intimacy and connection' (Thorne, 1993:95). The interaction between the two sub-groups of boys involved different ways of doing gender and expressing their masculinities (Connolly, 2004). The process in which Calum, Harry and Alastair 'did' gender could be described with the term 'hegemonic masculinities', in contrast to Hassan's and Tariq's 'non-hegemonic masculinities' (Connell, 2005).

However, gender and its performance was not the only important aspect of children's identities within this group of children. As Connell (1987) mentioned, apart from gender performances, relationships involve many more complexities that can, for example, be related to social class and ethnicity. All the different categories of difference (such as race, gender, social class, disability, age and so on) that are embedded in people's identities and affect power relations in social groups have been described by the term 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw, 1991, Davis, 2008, Konstantoni et al., 2017, Yuval-Davis, 2011). Intersectionality is not only used for analysing the complex interactions between social identities, but is also 'a counter-hegemonic praxis that seeks to challenge and displace hegemonic whiteness' (Konstantoni and Emejulu, 2017:8); it is a concept that 'demonstrates the complexity of processes of exclusion and inequality' (Konstantoni et al., 2017:3). Placing intersectionality in the field of childhood studies, Konstantoni and

Emejulu (2017) suggest that researchers should not de-prioritise race, but, instead, pay attention to “‘difference’, as structured by the particular dynamics of race, class, gender, geography and other categories of difference’. Furthermore, the way power operates and is reproduced within and through social groups is a core characteristic of intersectionality (Bilge, 2013, Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016). Therefore, it would be reductionist to explain Tariq’s and Hassan’s exclusion by simply analysing gender performances. As mentioned above, Tariq and Hassan both shared South-Asian racial characteristics and the rest of the boys were white British. Although racial difference was not explicitly discussed in the group, there seemed to be domination based on being white. This finding is also in line with the findings of other research; for example in her research, Konstantoni (2011) found that minority ethnic boys were often seen as outsiders, Evans and Holt (2011) talked about gendered and racialised identities that generate exclusionary practices, and Skattebol (2006) explained how common it is for children to use their gendered and racialised bodies to gain power and control.

The above excerpt was just part of a series of examples in which children appeared to be excluded from group work due to being ‘soft’ and because of their ‘race’ and ethnicity. Such examples were not limited to interactions among boys, but were also part of interactions among girls. The example below analyses Arisha’s collaborative work with two white Scottish girls through intersectionality and, apart from ‘race’, it also pays attention to friendship and emotions.

Arisha, Dorothy and Olivia were chosen to represent their school in a poster competition that was to take place among a few primary schools. These three children were chosen by the teacher (Juliet) because they belonged to the highest ability level in Mathematics. The theme of the competition was ‘The world of Maths’ and children had to create a scene of the real-life world that would involve jobs in which people have to use Maths. Arisha, Olivia and Dorothy were gathered in the project room, a small room next to their classroom. This was a space that children usually used when they wanted more privacy, as it was much smaller and less noisy than the classroom space. In the example below, Arisha did not seem to contribute equally to the collaborative process, although every member of the group (including Arisha) belonged to the highest level of ability in Mathematics.

The girls started planning their poster. Dorothy was writing down the ideas. Olivia proposed to the group that they could draw the High Street in their poster.

Olivia: Do we all agree with that? (They all agreed)

Dorothy was sketching on a piece of paper. She was sketching a building and proposed that they could draw some specific types of buildings.

Olivia: I really want to have a theatre with 3 layers in it...! We could also have something that people are making something, like carpenters.

Arisha: We could have a draper.

Dorothy: Or a tailor.

Dorothy: We could have parts that flip open.

Olivia: Also, in the theatre we can have managers or performers...

Dorothy: We can add boxes that could be the houses.

Arisha: Yes!

Olivia: We need to check the rules! It was not meant to be sculpture!

Dorothy: Do we need to make the buildings a bit taller?

Olivia: The tailor's building needs to be taller.

Dorothy: We can draw people on the street. We could also have a charity person and a label that says: help the dogs!

Dorothy (to Arisha): Do you want to ask for an iPad? You can figure out how we can use maths.

Olivia: It could be an amazing watercolour...

Dorothy: Let's make this amazing!!!

Olivia: I honestly think that this can be amazing.

Arisha: We can use some piece of fabric. (Arisha said that, but no one responded to her suggestion. Then, she left the group and went into the classroom to get an iPad.)

Dorothy and Arisha were talking loudly about the steps they were following and they were exchanging ideas, while they were working on different parts of the poster. They were also constantly supporting and encouraging each other, with phrases such as 'Make this beautiful, Olivia!', or 'Wow, this is amazing', or 'It may not win, but it is going to be the most beautiful'.

Arisha was sitting at another desk, but in the same room and she was working silently on the iPad. She wasn't getting any positive feedback from her team.

After a while, Dorothy asked Arisha: 'Have you found anything'?

Arisha: I found: footballer, mathematician, physicist...

Dorothy: No, we have made these shops! We need people like businessman, lawyer, electrical workers...

Arisha: Maybe a plumber?

Dorothy: Yes, and also builder, engineer, tailor.

Olivia: We need a singer, a janitor...

Dorothy: ...and also a dentist and a doctor.

Arisha: OK. (She started working on the iPad again, but she didn't seem to be very motivated.)

Arisha worked for some time on the iPad and then approached the two girls saying: 'We have to be quick!' Arisha suggested using a particular background colour and she also suggested that builders could wear brown and green clothes.

Olivia disagreed, saying: 'No, they will wear bright colours, like yellow and orange'.

Arisha: OK. Dentist and doctor will be blue and white. (No one commented on that suggestion.)

Dorothy: We can finish sketching before the lunch break and after lunch we can draw people.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 12 May 2015]

This excerpt illustrated a situation in which children who belonged to the same level of ability did not seem to contribute equally to the collaborative process. Arisha, Olivia and Dorothy had chosen to be in the 'extra hot' level for all the tasks and in all subjects. So, these three children did not have any differences in 'competence'. However, despite their belonging to the same ability level, the three girls did not have equal chances to have their perspectives and ideas heard and valued. Arisha was asked to undertake a peripheral task, i.e. to search for some information on the iPad, instead of participating in the creation of the poster. Overall, the atmosphere was not so welcoming to Arisha, who worked individually and whose suggestions for the poster were not taken on board.

Olivia, Dorothy, Arisha and Fatima (another girl from the same classroom) worked together a lot and were also friends. However, within that group of four girls, children mostly worked in dyads: Olivia–Dorothy and Arisha–Fatima. Dyadic relationships between children is a common characteristic of girls, as described by scholars (James and James, 2012, Thorne, 1993). In line with Ahn's (2010:106) research, although the three girls shared moments of affection as friends and collaborators, at this particular time and within this social context, Dorothy and Olivia formed a 'dyadic alliance structure' that excluded Arisha. Therefore, Arisha was restricted to a listener's role, whilst Dorothy and Olivia enacted more powerful and hegemonic identities. As mentioned in Blazek's (2011:287) work, friendships should not only be viewed as something positive, but also as mechanisms that might 'reproduce and re-stabilise established social structures of power, having thus exclusionary effects among children's peer groups'. It has also been argued that exclusionary practices within friendships might be caused by various differences that are linked to children's intersectional identities (Blazek, 2011).

Research has suggested that race is important for how children choose their friends and it is argued that children often choose friends with whom they share common characteristics (Konstantoni, 2011). In the aforementioned example, Olivia and Dorothy formed a strong bond; they were both white British, whilst Arisha had South-Asian racial characteristics. As mentioned above, the term ‘intersectionality’ has been used to examine how axes of difference interact and affect the relations of power among people (Cho et al., 2013, Konstantoni et al., 2017) that ‘produce and sustain social inequalities that are overlooked and erased’ (Bilge, 2013:407). In terms of other characteristics and axes of difference, all these three children were girls, they were three of the tallest girls in their class, all showed a very high academic performance, and all spoke English as fluently as a native speaker. Race was the most obvious difference between Arisha and the other two girls. The expression of children’s inclusion and exclusion from the group was performed through their emotions, as explained in the following paragraph.

The role of emotions as part of people’s intersectional identities and relationships is being explored in a growing body of research (Ahn, 2010, Zembylas, 2011, Kustatscher, 2017). Kustatscher (2017:65) argues that ‘emotions contribute to how intersectional identities are performed in the children’s peer relationships, and that analysing emotions is crucial for understanding how children’s intersectional belongings come to be politicised’. As presented in the above example, Olivia and Dorothy encouraged each other, showcasing happiness and excitement. They shared these emotions through phrases such as ‘It could be an amazing watercolour’, ‘Let’s make this amazing’, ‘Make this beautiful, Olivia!’ and so on. Children’s body language that included laughter, clapping, and smiles, also indicated Dorothy’s and Olivia’s enthusiasm. However, this excitement was not shared with Arisha, who was sitting at another desk and seemed sad about being unable to be included in the close relationship that Dorothy and Olivia had formed. Arisha would often pause in what she was doing to watch the moments of joy that were shared between Dorothy and Olivia; then she would slowly bring her attention back to the boring task that was assigned to her, that of researching different types of jobs on the internet. What we can also see from this example is that children’s emotions were not simply individual, but, rather, were triggered and generated through interactions (Ahmed, 2004, Ahmed, 2014). As Ahmed (2004:26, original emphasis) mentions, ‘emotions *do things*, and work to align individuals with collectives – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments’. Therefore, the above excerpt showed how children’s belonging and

exclusion were performed through the construction and expression of emotions (Kustatscher, 2017, Harden, 2012, Anthias, 2013).

Summing up, this section explored research question 3 (What are the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity?) through the two examples given above of group work among a group of boys and a group of girls. It has been argued that ‘everyday interactions in children’s lives are far from trivial, but steeped in relations of power’ (Kustatscher, 2017:74) and the present study contributes to this argument by illustrating how interactions between these children led to exclusionary practices which affected their experiences of creativity. More specifically, these examples showed the important role of gender, ‘race’ and emotions, in the way children’s bonds and friendships were formed and performed, leading to cultures of hierarchisation and exclusion. It has been argued that children’s practice of exclusion might be disempowering and disappointing to the less involved participants and this seemed to be the case for Hassan, Tariq and Arisha (Tisdall and Davis, 2004, Davis and Smith, 2012). Research on creativity suggests that co-constructive processes and practices that include diverse ideas and perspectives are crucial for enhancing creativity (Chappell, 2007, Glaveanu et al., 2015). However, on the basis of the above example of children’s interplay ‘inside’ the net of power (Foucault, 1978:95) it is difficult to see how creativity can flourish when diverse voices are washed out – an argument that is also highlighted by other research (see Davis et al., 2011, Davis, 2013). As this example showed, including diverse views and ideas is complex and complicated and relates not only to children’s decision to work together, but also to how children interact by performing their social identities within the group. Therefore, I suggest that it is of great importance that theorisations of collaborative creativity take into account the operation of power among children and pay particular attention to children’s intersectional identities. This will give greater depth to the analysis of the flourishing of creativity within group work and help researchers to avoid simplifications that result from viewing children as a homogeneous group.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, time pressure seemed to influence the collaborative process between children in the second example. The three girls seemed to be in a hurry to finish the poster within the limited timeframe that was given them. Ennew (1994:134) talked about the standardisation and curricularisation of time and of children’s lives in schools, in which the ‘learning experiences themselves actually serve to break up

the totality of knowledge into unconnected fragments'. She also emphasised that adults' surveillance becomes necessary to remind children to keep track of time (Ennew, 1994). However, the imposition of strict time limits is not in line with approaches for fostering creativity which call attention to the importance of flexible time limits (Dababneh et al., 2010, Cheung, 2016, Cremin et al., 2006). This leads us to another conclusion, that of the interconnections between cultures and structures. It can be argued that cultural barriers to creativity may be reinforced and enhanced by structural pressures. This finding links this chapter to the next chapter, which examines the cultural and structural barriers to creativity in schools.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented children's and teachers' perspectives on collaborative creativity, it has shown how collaborative creativity was experienced and performed in practice, and it has presented cultural barriers that emerged when an effort was made to implement creativity within collective environments. By presenting examples from children's experiences in school, analysing different instances of collaboration, 'each in its unique specificity' (Gallagher, 2008a:396), I have given insights into the dynamics and complexities involved in collaborative creativity.

Section 5.2.1 showed children's positive attitude towards co-constructive learning. According to children, collaborative and co-constructive approaches should include everybody and everyone should be encouraged to experience creativity within a group. The data of this section also showed that children sometimes confused the notion of creativity with that of innovation and perceived creativity as a good quality outcome rather than as a process.

Section 5.2.2 explored the teacher's views and showed that, according to the teacher, creativity is linked to collaboration in the sense that collaborative work helps creativity to flourish. Furthermore, this section showed that Juliet's positive stance towards collaboration, co-construction and creativity was developed within an environment of contradictory advice and guidance provided to teachers by policy documents and research on how to best promote creativity in schools. Therefore, this study suggests that the

promotion of rigid approaches to creativity is dangerous, as it creates barriers for both teachers and children to exploring what creativity means for themselves, and to experiencing and performing creativity in their own diverse, but equally valuable, ways.

Section 5.2.3 showed how two children (Ava and Alice) experienced creativity through collaboration and co-construction. The data showed that children's prior knowledge of the theme they were working on helped them to actively interact with their individual and collective learning. Children's internal motivation and passion for this task, combined with an overall atmosphere of trust, peer support and compassion, also affected their experience of collaboration and creativity. Additionally, Ava and Alice seemed to be immersed in a reflexive process of co-construction in which their personal voice balanced their collective voice, and these parameters led Ava and Alice to experience creativity throughout the whole process of co-creation. Therefore, the final product-outcome of this co-constructive work was coloured with a plethora of thoughts, emotions, feelings and experiences that children had collected through their interactions. Ava's and Alice's experience of creativity thus seemed to be something more dynamic, messy, meaningful and exciting than the image of the final product.

Section 5.3.1 showed that creativity was perceived by children as a dynamic process in which children's diverse views are combined through practices of dialogue and mutual respect. However, children's vision and intentions were not always implemented in practice. As section 5.3.2 showed, collaboration was often perceived as a synthesis of individual tasks. Such approaches led to the exclusion of difference, diversity, and consequently, creativity (Glaveanu et al., 2015), and by attributing children's experiences of creativity to the individual, put much more pressure on every individual to perform well and create good quality products.

Section 5.3.3 showed that a teacher's top-down, rigid and unreflexive approach might create barriers to children's creativity. Such approaches are characterised by a teacher's actions that aim to correct and regulate children's work, instead of valuing their diverse views and ideas that have emerged and travelled through processes of collaboration and co-construction.

Section 5.3.4 showed how different ways of being a boy affected children's relationships and creativity. In particular, this section showed that cultures of exclusion and cultural barriers to creativity may emerge when children 'do' gender by stressing attitudes of 'position and hierarchy' (Thorne, 1993:95), whilst the other interactants' gender performance is less dominant.

Section 5.3.5 demonstrated that children's academic performance was crucial to children's power and status within groups; the data indicated that power seemed to accrue to the very academic children, who tended to control the process and force their opinions on the members of the group. Section 5.3.6 went a step further to show how a combination of low academic performance and disability created insuperable barriers to some children's creativity through exclusionary practices. However, by presenting the experiences of two disabled children, section 5.3.6 also showed that disabled children's experiences are not homogeneous and that barriers to children's creativity (because of their disability and academic performance) also depend on how relationships are formed across time and between different people.

Section 5.3.7 presented an alternative example (although not a common one among my observations), in which power is viewed as a productive force that did not create barriers but, rather, fostered children's creativity. The data of this section showed that the type of relationship developed between Isa and Rory helped both of them to participate to the degree that they felt comfortable with, whilst, at the same time, they both experienced creativity in their own distinct ways.

Section 5.3.8 showed how the creation of cultural barriers to creativity can be better understood through examining children's intersectional identities. It demonstrated how exclusionary practices were created by paying attention to intersections of gender, race and emotions. Exclusionary practices led to the creation of cultural barriers to creativity, because diversity was used as a means of exclusion, instead of as a vehicle for reinforcing creativity.

Overall, the data showed that children's exclusion followed a pattern that was affected by parameters such as academic ability, race, friendships, emotions and the way children were 'doing' gender. For example, children of a low ability level or children with disabilities,

minority children in terms of race, children who were outsiders to a group of friends, and children with non-dominant masculinities were more likely to be excluded. These cultural barriers had negative effects not only for a few (excluded) children's individual creativity, but also for the richness and flourishing of all children's collaborative creativity. Finally, the data demonstrated that children's experiences, their inclusion or exclusion and the way they perform creativity might differ considerably when they work with different groups of children and within different structures. The interplay of factors such as academic ability, gender, race and friendships seemed to play a decisive role in the extent to which different children would be accepted.

Overall, the analysis of this chapter has shown that collaborative creativity entails many complexities, some of them rooted in the culture of the environment in which they act and interact. However, as very briefly mentioned in this chapter, the way that culture is formed and the way it functions cannot be seen separately from the wider structures. Thus, the focus of the next chapter will be on exploring cultural and structural barriers to creativity and on the balance between freedom and structures.

Chapter 6: Cultural and structural barriers to creativity

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined children's perspectives on collaborative creativity and also discussed how collaborative creativity was performed by children in practice. I presented examples of how creativity was fostered within collectivities through processes of mutual support and encouragement. I also argued that everyone's inclusion in a group was not enough for collaborative creativity and I identified patterns of exclusion of children from participation in groups. The previous chapter suggested that, in order to understand the way collaborative creativity works and to eliminate the difficulties encountered in being creative, we need to explore and understand how the cultures and structures of the learning environments work.

In this chapter I explore the cultural (research question 5a) and structural (research question 5b) issues that influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence. Emphasis is particularly placed on identifying cultural and structural barriers to creativity and also to understanding the pressures on teachers' and children's work and progress.

The chapter mainly draws on interviews and also on fieldnotes as data and is divided into four sections. The first two sections (6.2 and 6.3) examine the cultural barriers to creativity, the next section (6.4) pays attention to structural barriers to creativity; the last section (6.5) is about understanding the pressures that are placed on teachers and children, and also about exploring whether such pressures sustain and boost barriers to creativity.

6.2 Teachers' and children's agency embedded in a rigid system that creates cultures of exclusion

Teachers' agency is at the forefront of recent developments in education and this also includes Scotland and the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence (Priestley and Biesta, 2013, Priestley et al., 2015). The excerpt below illustrates the views of one teacher (Mrs. Ahmed) of 'Little Valley' primary school on teachers' agency and its influences on children's creativity.

Mrs. Ahmed: Well, it comes from our head teacher. And we know what we've got to teach and what we need to get through and how we do it is up to us really. We are planning with our colleagues, that's how we do it. And the creativity comes from us, we might say let's do that this way, we might go outside and do an outdoor learning lesson. Some teachers are quite rigid, they don't wanna do that but we are encouraged to be more creative and, you know, open-minded, open thinkers and in turn, that shows in our children. You know, the creativity that they come with to school. Because in their creativity, they say to them show me how you want me to show this mind map or whatever. Some of them may make a presentation on a computer, others will do a paper so...

Mrs. Ahmed sounded very positive and confident about being an agent of change and emphasised the benefits of this to both teachers and children. As she mentioned, the role of the head teacher was very important for providing this flexibility and letting teachers choose how to teach and decide what works best for their classroom. She also argued that the flexibility provided helped teachers be more creative, which opened up the path for children to be more creative as well.

It has been argued that the greater the opportunities for teachers' active agency, the stronger the children's agency becomes (Rogers and Wyse, 2015). Such rhetoric is supported by the CfE, which states that 'The quality of learning and teaching in every classroom – and the inspiration, challenge and enjoyment which can come from teachers' enthusiasm and commitment – will be critical to achieving our aspirations for all young people' (Scottish Executive, 2006:1). According to Mrs. Ahmed, teachers' initiatives and open-mindedness are also reflected in children's actions. She argued that it is teachers' responsibility to help children express their creativity and that teachers' ideas play a considerable role in this. In the lines below, Mrs. Ahmed explains how teachers' ideas are developed at 'Little Valley' primary school.

Krystallia: And where do you get these ideas from?

Mrs. Ahmed: We just come up with them. Or we go to a course with these, or we read, you know. And as a school we are like this didn't work this year, we are gonna try something else. And we do.

Krystallia: The teachers?

Mrs. Ahmed: Yeah. Teachers, head teachers... we always have meetings. We have lots and lots of meetings and we just try to see if this isn't working how we can work that as a school. And the head teacher is really good. She comes up with lots of initiatives that we try.

[Interview with Mrs. Ahmed, June 2015]

Mrs. Ahmed mentioned that teachers get ideas from a variety of sources, but what is most important is that the culture of the school encourages experimentation and promotes collaboration between staff members. Indeed, some researchers have argued that teachers who contribute to the development of curricula in the daily educational practice could be characterised as active agents (Rogers and Wyse, 2015). These researchers also highlight the importance of children's agency; however, Mrs. Ahmed's description is unclear as to how, and whether, teachers' agency is combined with children's agency. Other writers have problematised the notion of individual agency and referred to agency as a notion that involves interdependent relationships between people or different groups of people (Burkitt, 2016, Moosa-Mitha, 2005, Konstantoni, 2012). Within this framework, teachers' agency would not be seen separately from children's agency, but both parties would be involved in an organic, collaborative and dialogic process of co-creating learning practices (Davis and Smith, 2012).

Although Mrs. Ahmed elaborated on examples of teachers' individual agency, my own observation was that teachers' agency was often limited. For example, Mrs. Ahmed herself mentioned that the head teacher 'comes up with lots of initiatives that we try', which contradicts the previously mentioned co-constructive rhetoric and relates to centralised forms of employee control (Ball, 2003); it could also be described as an example of top-down management (Davis and Smith, 2012). The practical implementation of teachers' agency within the CfE has been much criticised by scholars (Priestley et al., 2015). As is argued, 'it is problematic to expect that teachers become agentic, when in their practical contexts they are unable to do so' (Priestley et al., 2015:127). Such claims are based on arguments that the burden put on teachers is increased by making them agents of change (Priestley et al., 2015) and that performativity regimes also raise considerable barriers to

that (Ball and Olmedo, 2013). Furthermore, as we will see in the following sections of this chapter, pressures put on teachers that limited their agency also included: a) expectations for teachers to comply on different interpretations of the Curriculum for Excellence by different head teachers (section 6.4.1); b) expectations placed on teachers to evidence the outcomes of their work (section 6.5.1); and c) parental interventions that questioned teachers' teaching (section 6.5.2).

Overall, teachers' individual agency led to actions (such as collaboration, decision-making on how to teach etc.) that could be beneficial for children's creativity, according to creative teaching approaches that pay considerable attention to teachers' practices (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004). However, children's involvement was missing in Mrs. Ahmed's narrative, and teachers' agency – in the way that Mrs. Ahmed described it – was not inter-connected with children's agency. When children's agency is not taken seriously, questions arise regarding the impact of such practices on how children experience creativity. It is important to mention that, in this context, teachers' agency was, to some extent, confined within a framework of top-down management and hierarchical relationships between staff. Teachers' opinions were heard, but did not seem to be valued equally with the views of more senior members of staff. This pattern was followed in the relationships between teachers and children, namely, in the sense that children's agency was not always promoted (see also sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.3). Answering research question 5a, cultural issues that influence childhood creativity emerge when the way that structures operate creates cultures of exclusion of particular perspectives. Thus, it can be argued that introducing teachers' and children's agency and participation into a rigid system without addressing the politics of participation, and of inclusion and exclusion of different viewpoints (Davis and Smith, 2012, Moosa-Mitha, 2005), does not create a supportive environment for co-creation, dialogue and creativity.

This section has presented cultural issues that influence childhood creativity raised by the limits on teachers' and children's agency, by analysing Mrs. Ahmed's description. The next section sheds more light on cultural issues that influence childhood creativity by providing examples of teachers' approaches that were meant to be creative, but in practice limited children's agency and created barriers to creativity.

6.3 Cultures of decision-making that exclude children

6.3.1 Creative teaching does not always foster children's creativity

Teachers' approaches were sometimes based on their beliefs on how creativity is cultivated; specifically, the belief that children's creativity flourishes because of creative teaching approaches. In the next example, Mrs. Ahmed elaborates on the importance of creative teachers for the promotion of children's own creativity.

Mrs. Ahmed: I think in primary schools we encourage our children to be creative and we have as teachers to be creative, because there is not two years in a row that I've done something similar. Every year, even if I've got the same year group we do things so differently, because we are thinking all the time. You're a creative thinker, think in different ways...change is good, you know? And we encourage our children to be creative as well. (...) When they go to high school, because they are learning about a specific subject then it's up to that teacher to be creative in English, to be more creative in teaching history. You know, there are so many ways you can teach history! You can get them to dress up, or read characters, that's what we get them to do here, go and visit places...I am sure they do all of that in high school. But the scope is a lot more in here, in primary.

[Interview with Mrs. Ahmed, June 2015]

Mrs. Ahmed's words highlighted the importance of creative teachers for enhancing creativity in schools. She argued that teachers who are active, who try out different things and who are creative in their practice inspire children to be creative as well. Mrs. Ahmed's arguments are supported by Scottish policy documents. For example, CfE (Scottish Executive, 2006) describes the crucial role of teacher's enthusiasm and commitment in accomplishing the aims that the CfE sets for children and young people. Furthermore, the 'Creativity Across Learning 3-18' (2013) document highlights the role of the teacher in delivering exciting and innovative lessons. As Mrs. Ahmed mentioned, taking on board the aforementioned suggestions, teachers can use a variety of approaches, including art, drama, and music. Mrs. Ahmed's approach is in line with what is described in the literature as 'creative teaching', which involves non-ordinary approaches to teaching that make learning more appealing and engaging (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004, Craft, 2005).

However, Mrs. Ahmed's approach relied heavily on teachers' actions and was based on hierarchical relationships between herself as a teacher and the children. As she mentioned,

‘you can get them to dress up, or read characters, that’s what we get them to do here, go and visit places...’ The above example shows that Mrs. Ahmed indeed used non-traditional ways of teaching by, for example, providing opportunities for children to participate in activities in various spaces, to wear costumes etc. However, her discourse emphasised teachers’ individual agency and authority, implying that children should act within the framework provided them by the teachers. This ties in with some of the literature, whose authors have stressed that barriers to children’s agency might emerge when adult-child relationships are based on hierarchical frameworks (Esser et al., 2016), or when the structures and cultures of the institutions are rigid and inflexible (Davis and Smith, 2012). For example, Moosa-Mitha (2005) explained how certain socio-political realities create cultures of inclusion and exclusion and illustrated how people are usually excluded ‘on the basis of their difference’, when difference is defined by the ‘mainstream culture of society’. Through the lens of Moosa-Mitha’s analysis, we can see analogies between the mainstream culture of society and the school’s dominant structures and cultures. Furthermore, children’s exclusion can also be linked to the ‘difference’ between themselves and the adult-teacher, as they are young in age and possess the status of a pupil.

The analysis of the above excerpt highlighted that, sometimes, the so-called creative teaching practices are in reality very much structured and prescriptive, through asking children to follow specific guidelines and leaving very little, if any, space for children’s input. Answering research question 5a, cultural issues that influence childhood creativity may emerge when teachers focus substantially on creative teaching practices, instead of building co-constructive relationships that would encourage children to take decisions about their learning. In other words, cultural barriers to creativity are raised through enforcing hierarchical relationships that limit children’s agency. The next section presents an example of how hierarchical relationships look in practice.

6.3.2 Contradictions between teachers’ aims and practices

The annual P7 (Primary 7) show was taking place at ‘Little Valley’ primary school. Children of P7 were being given singing, acting and dancing parts, in order to perform for their parents/carers what they had learned in primary school and what skills they had acquired. Children of P6 were also taking part in more ‘invisible’ and supportive roles. For example, they were responsible for designing the invitations, welcoming people on

the day of the show etc. The script for the show was written by the school's head teacher and aimed to elaborate on skills that the children had obtained in primary school through playing the game of Monopoly. The P7 show was described by the teacher (Juliet) as one of the most creative things that take place at 'Little Valley' primary school and she encouraged me to observe the rehearsals, which were being held every day for the period of a month and a half. I attended the rehearsals regularly and my reflections were similar every day, as outlined below.

Today children read out loud the script for the acting part of the show. The teacher who seemed more responsible for the acting part was Juliet. She didn't intervene too much, but when she did she was sometimes a bit strict, especially on disciplinary issues. Other than that, she observed and gave advice to the children on how to improve their acting skills. During the rehearsals, some children were acting and some others were passively observing them, because they either had smaller acting parts, or they didn't have to participate at that time. The teachers were very strict with these children, who had to be observing whilst remaining silent. So, they usually disciplined them by shouting loudly.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Tuesday, 10 March 2015]

The above excerpt describes the pattern that was followed every day during the rehearsals. The only noteworthy difference was that sometimes children were performing acting parts and other times singing or dancing parts. So, children's 'active involvement' was limited to repeating the same speeches, movements and music over the period of almost two months. This example ties in with Gallagher's (2011) research on sound, space and power in a primary school. Gallagher (2011:47) views schools as 'spaces of institutionalised power' through 'discipline and surveillance' and pays particular attention to aural surveillance that takes place when, for example, children comply with teacher's instructions.

It is difficult to see how the aforementioned example relates to an approach that fosters children's creativity. It seemed that children's agency was overshadowed by teachers' hierarchical approach, in the sense that all the important decisions about the development of learning practices were made by teachers and not through collaborative and dialogic practices between teachers and children (Rogers and Wyse, 2015, Ang and Flewitt, 2015). The cultivation of creativity has been linked to co-constructive practices, in which both

children and teachers contribute by their own means (Craft et al., 2014), but these elements were missing in the approach described above.

In addition to the previous example of children's limited agency, I observed that not all children were always participating in the rehearsals. In fact, during the acting parts most children had to sit down and passively observe those who were acting. Children who were observing could not always manage to remain silent and obedient and this led teachers to follow strict disciplinary practices, as presented in the following example.

All P6s and P7s were in the room today. P6s were sitting on the left and right corners of the room (gym hall). They participated in the singing parts. P7s did the acting and dancing parts. With so many children in the room, teachers were trying to maintain discipline and their behaviour was very strict. Teachers also adopted the following technique in order to make clear to the children that they need to stop talking: teachers were clapping their hands in a specific rhythm and children had to repeat this rhythm and at the same time they had to stop talking. Furthermore, I also heard teachers verbally threaten some children; teachers told children that if they keep disobeying the rules they will not be able to participate in the show.
[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Monday 16 March 2015]

The above excerpt documents teachers' high authority during what was meant to be a creative process, according to the teacher. Children did not seem to be internally motivated and passionate about this work (internal motivation has been described as important for fostering creativity (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016)); instead, teachers had to externally impose behavioural rules to get children to remain silent and follow the guidelines. Thus, this seemed to me a highly prescriptive, surveillanced and dry process in which children (especially children who were not actively participating) were apathetic and passionless.

The above features have links to what Freire described as the 'banking educational system', in which, amongst other things, 'the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined'; 'the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply' (Freire, 1993:73). Teachers' authority and domination were so strong that there was limited, if any, space left for making this process fun and enjoyable, meaningful and close to children's interests, which are just some of the elements that are believed to foster creativity (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015, Wiggins, 2011).

An alternative direction to Juliet's practices (as described in the above two excerpts) could be framed through approaches that criticise top-down management, focus on collaborative, dialogic practices (Davis and Smith, 2012), and view relationships as joined actions between individuals or collectives (Burkitt, 2016). As Burkitt (2016:336) explains, 'in interrelation, interdependence and interactions with others, interactants are always active and passive, powerful and yet vulnerable to various degrees, acting on others and being acted on by those others'. Such approaches pay attention to interdependencies in relationships, whilst, at the same time, recognising people's different perspectives and identities (Esser, 2016, Konstantoni, 2012). Through these lenses, children are perceived 'as a complex social collectivity' (Oswell, 2016:32) that 'comprise a multitude of experiences and positionalities' (Oswell, 2013:77). Such a less hierarchical and more dialogic framework that valued different perspectives might have been able to make children's 'presence' more obvious, in the sense that their 'voice, contribution and agency' would have been included in the learning process (Moosa-Mitha, 2005:382).

Researchers have argued that hierarchy often creates barriers to creativity (Davis et al., 2011). In a similar vein, this section has illustrated the fact that cultural issues that influence childhood creativity (research question 5a) might emerge when teachers' approaches are authoritarian and establish hierarchical relationships between adults and children. In addition, learning practices that are rigidly structured make it difficult for children to actively participate in their learning. So, highly prescriptive practices also create cultural barriers to creativity.

The next section presents Juliet's reflection on her teaching approach. It resembles this section in the sense that the teacher's aims are different from her practices, but offers an additional input, which is related to how structures influence teachers' approaches. As shown, 'if children's agency is shaped by structures', which we observed in this section, 'so too is the agency of adults' (White and Choudhury, 2010:46), and that is the subject of the analysis in the next section.

6.3.3 An example of how balancing freedom and constraint was negotiated in practice

During our conversation, Juliet elaborated on the flexible character of school days in the classroom and more specifically on how children's choices and agency are taken into account. One example of how Juliet tried to promote an approach that balanced freedom and structure is given below.

Juliet: But I think I am quite happy if I can stand back and watch and my whole class are learning, they are learning the curriculum in their own ways and they don't need me. I think that's brilliant. And I can then watch and monitor things. Hmmm...he needs a bit of extra help.

(...)

Also when they don't work I can say: well I let you have that choice and then you can take them away for a little bit and say: tomorrow I expect you to do x,y,z. And then they think hmm, fair enough. So do you want to go back doing it the other way and they are like no... They like getting the chance to pick their own ways of doing it. So...

[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

Juliet's explanation included phrases such as 'I can then watch and monitor things' and 'tomorrow I expect you to do x,y,z'. Although Juliet was encouraging children to choose their own ways to learn, she also seemed to be very worried about children not accomplishing the set aims and not finishing off their tasks. This worry seemed to be the reason why Juliet felt the need to often remind children of her expectations (in relation to how much work needed to be completed within certain time-limits), and to occasionally appraise their actions to make sure that they remained compliant with the freedom/constraint agreement made among the members of this classroom.

Scholars in the field of creativity have paid much attention to letting children work at their own pace (Jindal-Snape et al., 2013) and creating flexible settings in which feedback comes naturally through dialogic practices of mutual respect, rather than by the adoption of top-down approaches (Davis, 2013, Davies et al., 2013, Jindal-Snape et al., 2013). In cases like the one described above, Juliet did seem to attempt to involve dialogic aspects in her teaching practices, but she also seemed to feel pressured to meet the goals and demands of performativity (Ball, 2003). The latter is believed to constrain the possibilities for fostering flexible, dialogic practices and, instead, create 'inauthentic practice and relationships' between teachers and children, since the teachers 'are no longer encouraged

to have a rationale for practice, account of themselves in terms of a relationship to the meaningfulness of what they do, but are required to produce measurable and improving outputs and performances, what is important is *what works*' (Ball, 2003:222, original emphasis). Therefore, it can be argued that frameworks that focus substantially on controlled outcomes and performativity raise barriers to creativity. However, on a more positive note, this section showed that creativity can still flourish within these frameworks, albeit in restricted ways – and embedding dialogic aspects in teaching practices assists the implementation of this goal.

The analysis of this section's excerpt discussed cultural issues that influence childhood creativity (research question 5a), which are linked to teachers' approaches to negotiating the balance between freedom and constraint in teaching and learning practices. As illustrated above, teachers' concerns that children might not be able to achieve the set standards and finish off their work, are linked to pressures to meet the demands of performativity and limit the possibility for fostering creativity. Section 6.3 discussed some of the cultural issues that influence childhood creativity. The next section takes a slightly different route, by exploring the structural issues that teachers had to deal with in their attempts to implement less-prescriptive and creativity-supportive practices.

6.4 The way the Curriculum for Excellence is interpreted influences creativity in schools

6.4.1 Curriculum for Excellence and its multiple identities

The organisation and design of curricula is not value free (Craft, 2005). Instead, it embeds the beliefs of the people involved in the creation of the curricula and their vision for the future of education and society (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016, Wyse et al., 2014). The way creativity is conceived and theorised is mirrored in the curricula, including, of course, the Curriculum for Excellence. An important theme that was mentioned by Juliet is that the CfE is interpreted differently in different schools. The way it is interpreted and implemented can either boost or eliminate barriers to creativity, as explained below:

Krystallia: So do you think that the CfE gives you more flexibility?

Juliet: Yeah, definitely. When I speak to friends who work in other countries or even in other schools in Scotland a lot of them are saying, we have to do it this way. And they are kind of told how to do it. Either from their leadership in the school or from how they have interpreted the CfE. Or in schools that don't have the CfE because they are in a different country and they, you know, they are following guide books. We've got two members of staff moving schools, one out of the country and one within Scotland, and one of them who is within Scotland so has the CfE they still talked about as a new curriculum in some schools! And it's not new! Because I've been here for eight years and we've been talking about planning within the CfE for all of those eight years. When some schools are kind of introducing it now. So I think it's about how your school interprets it. So this one member of staff who is moving within Scotland, she's been told by her new school: they have a grammar book and they are told the pages they are at. They have a spelling book and they are told where they are in the spelling and what they've got to do for that. They are told that, this is your maths book and do this section. And I just feel that...how is that appropriate for all the children in your class? I just think that's really boring!

[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

Juliet explained that her school had been working towards CfE for 8 years. CfE was introduced in 2006 and formally implemented in 2010 and Juliet viewed its implementation as continuous and ongoing. However, she also mentioned that CfE was interpreted very differently in different schools. She described some school's approaches to the curriculum as very rigid and prescriptive and linked this to the way teachers interpret the curriculum and the school's leadership. Juliet mentioned that in some schools in Scotland teachers 'are following guide books'; 'they have a grammar book and they are told the pages they are at'; 'they have a spelling book and they are told where they are in spelling and what they've got to do for that'; and 'they are told that, this is your maths book and do this section'. Juliet concluded by saying that she found these firm practices boring, thus implying that both she and the leadership of 'Little Valley' primary school interpreted the Curriculum in a more flexible way.

Juliet describes a context in which teachers' participation in the practical implementation of the CfE is limited, if not impossible. This excessive control and the very limited opportunities for teachers' autonomy link to critiques of the CfE, which mention that it is based on the neoliberal rhetoric of economic competitiveness (Priestley and Biesta, 2013). As argued, although the CfE was developed independently from the rest of the United Kingdom (Wrigley, 2006, Humes, 2013), it didn't manage to sustain a truly progressivist

agenda, partly because of global pressures to raise standards and performativity (Humes, 2013), such as the PISA measurements (Wyse et al., 2014). As Priestley and Biesta (2013) argue, the neoliberal ideas that inform the CfE have appropriated misleading slogans of progressive education. For example, they argue that, although CfE seems to be less prescriptive, it is much focused on performativity and assessment standards (Priestley and Biesta, 2013).

On the other hand, CfE is not always interpreted as a rigid curriculum. After mentioning rigid practices found in different schools, Juliet highlighted her critique of such prescriptive approaches and of the surveillance of teachers' work by saying: 'How is that appropriate for all the children in your class? I just think that's really boring!' This shows that CfE is not interpreted in the same way by all teachers in Scotland, and that some teachers might read and implement the policy suggestions in a critical way (Ball and Olmedo, 2013). Indeed, apart from the relation of the CfE to neoliberal rhetoric, CfE has also been seen by supporters as a 'progressive, modern and motivating curriculum' (Ecclestone, 2013:77), with a focus on 'dialogic pedagogies, active learning and learner autonomy' (Priestley et al., 2015:114).

It can be argued from the above that the CfE has multiple and conflicting identities. When it is interpreted as a flexible curriculum that can be adapted to the needs of each school and classroom, then it is supportive of the cultivation of creativity (Craft, 2003b, Ferrari and Wyse, 2016). On the other hand, when CfE is viewed through neoliberal lenses, then it hides dangers and barriers to creativity in schools. Answering research question 5b (on structural issues that influence childhood creativity), CfE's multiple identities and the lack of clear coherence as to what is expected of teachers lead to a blurred and unclear landscape. This lack of clarity means that schools are without a distinct plan, strategy and framework for enabling creativity. It means, further, that school cultures which have enabled different and flexible approaches to implementation could also create structural barriers to creativity (e.g. lack of a clear plan, framework and approach). The latter point links to the findings of the CREANOVA project, namely, that creativity does not happen in a vacuum and needs a balance between total freedom and rigidity (Davis et al., 2011).

In this section Juliet argued for a flexible interpretation of the curriculum and criticised rigid readings and understandings of it. However, the question is whether what Juliet

claimed was also happening in practice. The next section presents a not so flexible approach to working within the CfE, which contradicts Juliet's arguments in this section.

6.4.2 The structure of Curriculum for Excellence: chunks, subjects, themes and interdisciplinarity

6.4.2.1 Teacher's rationale for viewing the curriculum as chunks

Although in the previous section Juliet supported the view that at 'Little Valley' primary school CfE was interpreted as a very flexible curriculum, this did not always seem to be reflected in practice. In the following example, Juliet elaborates on her understanding of the CfE and on the way it was implemented in practice in her classroom.

Krystallia: So how do you have the opportunity to give them this choice? Is this because of the Curriculum, is this because of the school?

Juliet: I suppose it's my interpretation of the Curriculum, because we are told to give them personalisation and choice, which this absolutely does. This can give depth because...if I was telling them we'll do writing until break, maths until lunch and this afternoon we are doing art. Then when the kids are finished they are doing that finishing off thing or they are getting extra work to...oh write two sentences or write this, write that. They are not getting the opportunity to go back and revisit keeping myself safe or French...I feel that by doing that this way when some classes in one day they'll do maths, they'll do writing and they'll do art. That's the 3 things you are doing, end of. My class will get their art chunk, will get their maths chunk, will get the writing chunk but then unlike in other places because it's all prepared they might have done a little bit of French...

As Juliet mentioned, she decided to view learning within the CfE as chunks. So, instead of creating a structured plan for the day, she used to encourage children to decide how to structure their day by choosing when to work on different learning chunks (e.g. writing, maths etc.). According to Juliet, this was very important for children's learning, because it provided them with opportunities for personalisation and choice, by, for example, being able to decide when and for how long to work on different chunks.

Juliet's positive attitude towards the benefits of personalisation and choice is linked to the aims of the CfE to promote 'enthusiasm and motivation for learning' (Scottish Executive, 2004:12) through creating individualised learning practices (Reeves, 2013). Personalisation is also seen as a positive thing that, when combined with participation, helps individuals to have more control over the structures (Reeves, 2013). Personalisation

has also been described positively through the lens of children's rights and democratic schooling that focuses on person-centred education and pays significant attention to children's views (Fielding, 2008). Within this framework children's choice increases and they can choose 'the style, pace, topic and broad direction of their learning' (Fielding, 2008:58).

On the other hand, personalisation has been criticised for following a neoliberal and modernisation agenda that aims to promote specific plans for individuals with the ultimate goal of boosting the economy (Fielding, 2008). Through this prism, personalisation focuses on ticking boxes and improving specific skills (Wrigley, 2006), whilst exploration remains marginalised (Fielding, 2008). Personalisation and choice have also been criticised for promoting 'learnification of education' (Biesta, 2010, mentioned in Priestley et al., 2015), which underpins the idea that learning is good but does not ask questions such as 'what is being learnt and what it is being learnt *for*' (Priestley et al., 2015:10). This leads to a lack of focus on very important issues surrounding the content and purpose of learning (Priestley et al., 2015). Overall, a managerialistic (that is, with emphasis on top-down command and control (Davis and Smith, 2012) understanding of personalisation narrows the focus of educational practices to a process of improving skills and ticking boxes.

CfE does not refer to learning as chunks (the way Juliet chose to organise the aims of the CfE), but calls for learning through themes and interdisciplinarity (Priestley et al., 2015, Biesta et al., 2015). As argued, 'although disciplines are the basis for knowledge this does not mean that school subjects are necessarily the most appropriate way to organise knowledge in the school curriculum' (Wyse et al., 2014:5). The same authors propose the use of aims instead of subjects in school curricula (Wyse et al., 2014). A thematic approach to organising curricula is also supported by scholars who argue that such an approach fosters both children's and teachers' creativity (Craft, 2003b). Promoting learning through chunks/discrete subjects eliminates children's creativity 'in discouraging thinking about themes which cross the subject boundaries' (Craft, 2003b:119).

This section reflected on the structural issues that influence childhood creativity, answering research question 5b. Juliet's agenda on personalisation – although it seemed to borrow arguments from children's rights approaches – mostly reflected and embodied

arguments from the managerialist side of personalisation. Cultivation of skills within a tick-box system was perceived as more important than exploration and risk-taking, and so raised barriers to children's creativity. Furthermore, organising the curriculum through chunks created a rigid structure that did not promote interconnections between different subjects, thus making the conditions for the cultivation of children's creativity more difficult to achieve.

Although children usually had opportunities to choose when and how long to work on each chunk, this was not always the case. The following section draws attention to a case in which the pace and structure of learning through chunks was controlled by the teacher.

6.4.2.2 A structured approach to learning through chunks

In the example given below, children were working on Math-tasks that were part of the different chunks (usually called PAC tasks). Children were sometimes working individually or in groups on Math chunks, but in some cases like the one mentioned below, the teacher was controlling the process.

The teacher presented at the interactive whiteboard the following problem:
'Cara has 6 costume changes in the P7 show. She keeps her clothes neat and well-organised... Cara thinks: I want to find out how heavy my bag of clothes is! I've only got one set of scales and my bag isn't heavy enough to show up on these scales. What can I do?'

The teacher asked children to give suggestions on what Cara can do, on how she can find out how heavy her bag is.

Rhiana raised her hand and the teacher gave her permission to talk. Rhiana said: 'She can stand on it herself, weigh how much she weighs. Then she takes the bag and sees the total'.

Then, without asking the opinion of any other child and without further discussion of Rhiana's suggestion, the teacher presented the solution on the interactive board. The steps were similar to what Rhiana had suggested and accompanied with pictures.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Tuesday, 12 May 2015]

The above excerpt presents a common example of what happened when the whole class was doing Maths together under the teacher's guidance. Usually the timeframe was very limited and, as a result, Maths did not involve dialogue and suggestions from all students, as noted above. Instead, the teacher displayed many exercises one after the other, and children were provided with limited time to think individually or to discuss their ideas in groups, before one child or a couple of children were asked to share their ideas with the

whole class. Overall, there was very limited time for discussion and, apart from the children who expressed their thoughts, it was very unclear whether everyone had obtained a good understanding of the exercises and of different possible ways of solving them, which were not usually discussed.

The structured approach that underpins the above excerpt is not in line with Juliet's arguments on the benefits of personalisation and choice that were mentioned in the previous section. Although Juliet's intention was to create opportunities for children to choose how to structure their day and to decide how much time to spend on each task, the above example showed that this was not always happening in practice. Limited time was a very important factor in the emergence of such controlled practices. As Wrigley put it,

‘Children have been reduced again to passive listening or giving short answers to teachers’ questions. Even when government advice seems to encourage interaction and cooperative group work, this is undermined by the constant pressure to increase pace and test results. The result is an assembly-line style parody of interactive learning – cooperative discussion disciplined by a stopwatch’ (Wrigley, 2006:9).

The type of structured learning described in this section was not used to help children obtain deep understanding through participation, discussion and reflection, but was merely focused on finishing off a great quantity of work in a limited time. Ennew (1994) made similar claims when she talked about adult power and the supervision of children's time to make sure that children were meeting their schedules.

Summarising the above, it can be argued that teachers' intentions to create more flexible learning environments was not always reflected in their practices. This section reflected on research question 5b, arguing that structural barriers to creativity may emerge as a result of organising the curriculum in chunks. Through such categorisation rigid practices are more likely to arise. For example, there are clear boundaries between different subjects and limited timeframes determining the time children should spend on each task. What we therefore see is an inflexible disconnection between different subjects; this constrains children's attempts to perceive and perform creativity by making connections between distinct domains of knowledge.

The inconsistency between teachers' intentions and practice is not detached from the overall framework in which teachers' work is supervised by externals, as described in the following section.

6.5 Understanding the pressures on teachers' and children's work and progress

6.5.1 Expectations placed on teachers to evidence the outcomes of their own work

During our conversation with Juliet, she mentioned some limits to creativity. For example, teachers' need to evidence their work can be one such barrier, as mentioned below:

Juliet: I also think teachers worry about the evidencing of their work. And that's something that we were worried about here, but we've used our class learning record to combat that. And to get children just write in their books, not play the maths game today. So I think that this can be a barrier.
[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

As Juliet mentioned, teachers feel worried about providing evidence of their work. This concern sometimes creates barriers to flexible teaching and learning practices according to Juliet. For example, educational activities that are also fun for children sometimes have to be replaced by meaningless tasks (Wrigley, 2006), such as keeping notes on the activities that took place in the classroom.

Juliet's worries about evidencing her work are also highlighted in the literature, where scholars mention that teachers are under pressure to be creative in their teaching, but also to meet externally imposed standards (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016, Hayward, 2015). As described, education has become too technicist by putting strong emphasis on 'what works' and, at the same time, diminishing 'ethical, social, political and educational considerations' (Fielding, 2008:59). This change has led to a transformation in the teaching profession that pays considerable attention to outputs and performances instead of to learning processes (Ball and Olmedo, 2013, Ball, 2003).

This turn to more managerial practices – among which is the expectation placed on teachers to evidence their work – can be explained by taking into account the influence of international measures such as PISA on policy-makers' views on how to design curricula (Wyse et al., 2014). These measures promote an image of education that all schools should aim for, which is characterised by its universality in terms of effectiveness and improvement criteria (Wrigley, 2011). Although in Scotland practices of measurement, control and school-level comparisons have not been prevalent lately (Johnson, 2016), there was a recent shift towards increased surveillance of school performances, through the introduction of a programme of standardised testing in Scottish schools (The Scottish Government, 2015).

The aforementioned expectations led teachers to avoid spending time on things they consider important and to focus more on what teachers themselves view as meaningless tasks that document teachers' and children's work: as Juliet observed, 'to get children just write in their books, not play the maths game today'. Juliet's approach links to the following questions, mentioned by Ball (2003:220): 'Are we doing this because it is important, because we believe in it, because it is worthwhile? Or is it being done ultimately because it will be measured and compared?' In this case, Juliet chose to follow the approach described in the second question. The focus on meaningless tasks in which children's participation and choice are limited, if not impossible, can also be linked to the Fordist model of mass-production in which workers worked under rigid supervision to produce standardised products (Ball, 1998, Avis, 2005). It can therefore be argued that teachers' need to evidence their work prompted them to focus extensively on meaningless tasks and reduce the time spent on more worthwhile, exploratory activities consisting of active learning and participation.

This section analysed structural issues that influence childhood creativity (research question 5b), illustrated the pressures on teachers to work to a rigid, overly evidence-focused 'what works' agenda, and the knock-on effect of teachers asking children to spend time on meaningless, time-consuming tasks. Similarly, the next section describes how assessment of children's performance and parental expectations raised barriers to the promotion of a more progressivist agenda for teaching and learning.

6.5.2 Two different types of assessment and the barriers to children's creativity that are raised by each approach

Assessment in this P7 classroom of 'Little Valley' primary school was not a top-down process controlled by the teacher, but was more inclusive in the sense that children and parents were also involved in the process. The following example describes how the reflection forms were used for assessment purposes.

Children were asked to complete the 'reflection form' that would be used for parent and teacher consultation. The form was divided in the areas of 'Literacy & English', 'Maths & Numeracy', 'Behaviour and Activities' and 'All other areas'. Children were asked to complete a column entitled 'pupil comments', writing their own thoughts on what they think they know and in which areas they think they can be improved. Isa told me that she found this activity very important, as it helped her be more thoughtful about things she knew well and things that she needed to improve.
[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Tuesday, 3 March 2015]

The aim of this process was to get children to reflect on their learning and write down some thoughts on 'what they know' and 'how to improve'. This process was perceived positively by the children; for example, Isa perceived it as an important process that helped her to be more thoughtful about her own learning. Knowing what she knew and what she didn't know was for Isa an important step in understanding how to improve.

The process was a form of assessment that could be described by the term 'formative assessment', which is a type of assessment used for helping learning (Harlen, 2016). In this type of assessment the focus is not on the outcome, but on the process of learning and the aim is to shed more light on how teaching and learning can be improved (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016, Menter and Hulme, 2013). However, although the focus remained on the process of learning, the criteria set for children seemed rigid; priority was given to the core subjects of 'Literacy-English' and 'Maths-Numeracy', which, apart from producing hierarchies between different subjects, also raised clear boundaries and distinctions between these subjects. Thus, children were called on to assess their learning under these categories without having any space to draw links and interconnections between different subjects.

Reflection forms were initially created by children and the teacher, before teacher-parent consultation. However, reflection forms were not the only way of assessing children's work; another approach that was used involved parents in more direct ways, as observed below:

The teacher was sitting at her computer working on children's individual profiles. She didn't write everything by herself, but she invited children to discuss with her. The process went like that; she would read a text that she had previously written and children would be commenting on that. Then, the teacher would make some changes according to children's suggestions and she would include some of the children's quotes for her final draft. As Ava mentioned, 'She types what you say; your feelings, her feelings'. Then, parents receive this document and they can also write their comments below.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Wednesday, 20 May 2015]

In this example, the teacher co-created the assessment with the children's assistance. The starting point was a text that the teacher had written, which was used as a basis for discussion between the teacher and the children. Then, the teacher would make some changes to her text, based on children's suggestions, and the final draft would be sent to parents, who would then be able to write down their comments.

This example resembles what is described in the literature as 'summative assessment'. It is quite different from 'formative assessment' and focuses on providing a clear picture of what has been learnt at a particular time (Harlen, 2016). Advice on assessment that was provided to teachers in Scotland mentioned that teachers would be expected to 'know and understand how to apply the principles of assessment, recording and reporting as an integral part of the teaching process' (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012:9). Further advice to teachers mentioned that assessment should incorporate dialogic parts between teacher and children (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012). Additionally, the importance of communicating the assessment results along with parents has been highlighted by scholars, who argue that such an approach would improve teaching and learning (Wyatt-Smith and Looney, 2016).

However, involving parents in the process of assessment was not without problems, as illustrated by Juliet below:

I think the worry of parents can be a barrier. That's why we are having our class learning records, to show all the other learning. Because some parents come and say: You've not done any maths and it says November! In their book! We don't do all our maths in books. We do maths when they are making a poster. All their maths is up, it's the displays, it's the group work. It's the photos in the book. They can talk about it. So I think parents and the worry of them questioning our teaching.
[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

The above quote mentions that teachers feel pressure from parents to evidence, not the flexible or creative work that takes place in the classroom and involves a lot of learning itself, but the work that has been done in specific areas of the curriculum, such as Mathematics. This, according to Juliet, restricts teachers' initiatives that promote flexible teaching and learning practices, and raises barriers to creativity.

Building an engaging and trusting relationship with parents has been described as a tricky and difficult task for teachers (Blomberg and Knight, 2015). Meeting parents' expectations is an extra, and greatly significant responsibility for teachers. As Ball (2003:220) shows, teachers have 'a sense of being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies'. In the context of this P7 class, parents' attitudes, as described by Juliet, focused on the importance of the outcomes of learning and indicated a preference for more technical approaches to teaching and learning rather than practices that would actively involve children. Such approaches, characterised as confining learning to a technical practice, have been included in what Moss (2016) describes as the de-politicisation of education. Thus, building democratic practices of dialogic learning and collective choice (Moss, 2016, Fielding, 2008) are not highly valued by parents, who seem to mainly recognise the significance of measurable outcomes. Within this context teachers seem unable to enforce progressive and flexible practices due to parental pressures. As Priestley et al. (2015) mention, effective changes in education should not only include changes in structures, but also changes in cultures. The change in cultures according to Priestley et al. (2015) is related to teachers' actions and activities. However, analysis of the data for the present study, as mentioned above, indicates that parental influence should also be included under the umbrella of 'cultures'.

This section has reflected on research questions 5a and 5b. Structural issues that influence childhood creativity (research question 5b) were linked to barriers created by practices of

assessment, which, although they fitted within the framework of assessment for learning, were rigidly structured and paid excessive attention to different chunks of knowledge. Thus, the view of learning as fragmented chunks was reinforced by assessment practices, making the fluid connections between different subjects that creativity requires even more difficult. Cultural issues that influence childhood creativity (research question 5a) that were explored in this section were linked to parental expectations, which were contrasted with the cultivation of flexible learning settings and did not go along with teachers' intentions. Thus, it can be argued that the cultivation of creativity needs both structures that promote interconnections between different subjects and chunks of knowledge at every stage of the learning process, and cultures both inside and outside the school (teachers, parents) that embody willingness to understand and support more fluid and flexible practices.

This section explored practices of control and surveillance of children's progress and teachers' work through assessment mechanisms. The next section sheds additional light on more subtle, everyday mechanisms of monitoring children's individual progress.

6.5.3 How the system of ability levels raised barriers to children's creativity

6.5.3.1 Children choose the level of their preference: self-discipline and surveillance

One of the first things I noticed in this P7 classroom was the system of different levels that represented different ability groups. There were three different levels, namely: mild (the easiest level), hot (medium level of difficulty), and extra hot (the highest level for the most difficult activities). Three different sheets of paper (one for each level) were glued behind the door and were visible to everyone. Thus, when children chose a level, they had to add their names to the relevant sheet of paper and this was a form of publicly announcing their level to everyone. This reminds us of the work of Foucault (1977), in which he described how the public display of torture was used to generate fear among the population. Other researchers have made similar remarks; for example, Aruldoss (2014) explained how 'public naming' was used to generate fear among children. However, children did not express any concerns about publicly announcing their choices. Instead, they were familiar

with the use of the different levels and often emphasised the fact that they could change their level anytime, as mentioned by Rhiana below:

Rhiana: ...so you are very good at maths so you are gonna be extra hot but if you are not good at everything you can change, so you are not restricted into one group, you can change it. The teacher hasn't assigned those groups, we did it ourselves. So one day you could be really good about a subject say 'I'm gonna try hot or you could say I'm gonna have an off day, I'm gonna try mild or...mmm I think I'm gonna try hot because I'm kind in the middle'. Which is good because you are not restricted, it's kind of free.
[Interview with Rhiana, 08 June 2016]

For Rhiana the practice of using ability levels seemed to be perceived positively. She mentioned that ability levels offered children the freedom to choose the level of their own preference. She also highlighted that teachers did not allocate children to specific groups, as it was children's own responsibility to do so.

Ability grouping has been described as an unfair and dangerous approach, as it creates and reinforces assumptions about children's innate intelligence and ability, ignoring their experiences outside school that are determinative for their development (Hart et al., 2004, mentioned in Wrigley and Wormwell, 2016). Furthermore, ability grouping follows developmental discourses in which children's progress is 'tracked according to predefined key stages' (Woodhead, 2009). Additionally, this approach has been extensively criticised by scholars, who emphasise that it is very unlikely to raise standards through ability groupings (Ireson and Hallam, 1999) and also that children from minority ethnic backgrounds or low socio-economic groups tend to be overrepresented in the lowest ability groups (Davies et al., 2003). Despite such critiques, a system of ability levels was used in this P7 classroom at 'Little Valley' primary school and was promoted as a positive action by being framed within the discourse of free choice. What this system claimed to offer was the opportunity for children to choose for themselves, rejecting arguments that describe children as immature human beings and, thus, lacking the responsibility to make choices (Reeves, 2013). However, children's participation was framed by restrictive structures; namely, they were indeed able to choose the level of their preference, but within a framework that categorised them in a hierarchical order of ability.

Although children expressed the view that choosing their individual ability level was only up to them, Juliet presented a more complex reality, as mentioned below:

Juliet: Basically they get to choose their own level. And I think that children will pick...generally they pick the right level. Sometimes they will pick easier stuff. But then again is where the teacher needs to say no. You are not mild, you are hot. Give that a try today. Which helps with their motivation and it helps with their self-esteem and it also helps them to progress. But there is also...sometimes kids will be like: Oh yeah, I can do the really hard stuff and that's great if they want to give it a try but they will monitor that themselves if that is too hard, they do not want to do work that is too hard for them forever. And they don't want to do stuff that is too easy for them forever. So they themselves will correct that and they will fix what they need to do.

[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

Juliet confirmed that children were able to choose the ability level of their preference. But she also mentioned that 'generally they pick the right level', which showed that the teacher had also categorised children in the ability groups that she thought they belonged to. Juliet mentioned further that when children picked a lower level than the one that met Juliet's expectations, she would intervene, prompting these children to try something more challenging. Moreover, the fact that children self-monitor their level without teacher's guidance was seen as important by Juliet. As Foucault (1990) explained, the promotion of self-discipline acts as a force motivating others to follow the same pattern of behaviour. In another work, Foucault again highlights the notion of self-discipline, arguing that 'if we take educational institutions, we realise that one is managing others and teaching them to manage themselves' (Foucault, 1984:370, mentioned in Deacon, 2002:435) and, therefore, connecting teachers' governance with mechanisms of self-discipline that are imposed on children.

Within an ability-driven ethos, children were encouraged to collaborate with peers from the same level of ability. As the ultimate goal of this collaboration was the quality of outputs and maintenance of good performance, children were pushed either by the teacher or by themselves to achieve the best possible performance, instead of paying attention to the process of learning and to helping each other (Avis, 2005). This framework can be linked to what Moss (2016, 2015a, 2015b) called the concept of quality. As he showed, the 'quality' of an educational institution is aligned with certain values and assumptions linked to 'not only universality, objectivity and stability, but also certainty and closure'

(Moss, 2016:9). For Moss (2015a), such understandings of quality are grounded in the positivistic realm and do not incorporate the ethical and the political. Overall, he argues that viewing childhood education ‘as “a technical fix”, or “magic potion”, is not only misleading; it is dangerous too...’ (Moss, 2015b:3).

Children’s categorisation in different ability groups was by default raising structural issues that influenced childhood creativity (research question 5b), through creating a hierarchical order of abilities which limited, if it did not make it impossible, the opportunity for children of different levels to work together and collectively build creative explorations by using their differences as a driving force rather than as a tool for segregation in categories of able and less able. Furthermore, structural issues/barriers to creativity were raised by cultures that embraced the importance of the quality of the outputs and good performance, which was either inspected by teachers or by the children themselves through processes of self-monitoring. The next section reflects on children’s views on choosing the right level for themselves.

6.5.3.2 Expectations for children to perform well, focusing on their individual progress

Ability groups were used on a daily basis and the teacher would often remind children to choose the level of their preference for every new activity. Sometimes, the teacher would explain her expectations of each level in order to help children choose the right level for themselves. The following two excerpts present children’s rationale for choosing their level.

Krystallia: What do you think about the different levels?

Dorothy: I enjoy it because we don’t have certain groups in our class, we have quite fluid groups and you can choose for yourself so say...Maths. You might be really, really good at division but not so good at subtraction. And so you can choose the best supporting group to get the right amount of work for you and I think that’s very good.

[Interview with Dorothy, 08 June 2015]

In a similar vein, Olivia emphasised the importance of using groups to support their individual progress to the maximum since they worked with children of the same ability level, as described below:

Krystallia: Do you prefer to work with children that are on the same level as you or on a different level?
Olivia: From the same level. I am extra hot which is the hardest work and I like working with other people who are extra hot.
Krystallia: Why?
Olivia: Because we can also help each other and if I was doing it with someone who was say hot then I would have to be helping them a lot and maybe not get to do as much work on my level.
[Interview with Olivia, 10 June 2016]

In both the above excerpts, children put considerable emphasis on using ability levels for their personal progress and improvement. Dorothy talked about ‘choosing the best supporting group to get the right amount of work for you’, which indicates a focus on individual work and progress. Olivia justified her preference for working with people from the highest ability level (the level to which she also belonged) because this helped her to do more work, instead of ‘wasting’ time helping children from a lower level. Thus, rhetorics from both children describe the system of levels in a positive way and through an individualistic lens.

This turn to individualism in schools and the rationale of ‘emptying out’ social relationships are associated with the structures of the educational system and pervasive ideas whose proponents want schools to function as ‘high performance learning organisations’ (Fielding, 2008:64). Activities that focus strongly on outcomes and measured attainment are embedded in school programmes and require children to be individual choosers in order to achieve the best outcomes for themselves (Fielding, 2008). Such approaches seem to care more about the ‘survival of the fittest’ (Ball, 1998) than about the common good and collective empowerment and well-being (Fielding, 2008). Although teachers do not seem to intervene that much, as children are responsible for choosing their own level, there are other, covert and possibly more powerful means of surveillance and control. As Ball (1998:123) portrays, this resembles a steering mechanism, ‘a form of indirect steering or steering at a distance which replaces intervention and prescription with target-setting, accountability and comparison’. Thus, it can be concluded that the turn towards and focus on individualism and individual progress might also be connected with practices of self-monitoring and self-surveillance.

Linking the above to research question 5a, cultural issues that influence childhood creativity are raised when the culture of the classroom focuses on individualism, instead

of on building collaborative and flexible practices. Researchers have highlighted that diversity is very important for creative expression and creativity in general (Glaveanu et al., 2015), but practices that drive children to individualism raise barriers to that. If education is based on a market-model, in which values such as equity and critical reflection are being undermined for the sake of profit (Beach, 2007), then there will be less and less space for reflection, co-construction and creativity.

6.5.4 Awards and external motivation: individualism and individual performativity

In this P7 classroom at ‘Little Valley’ primary school there was a system of awards and rewards. This system was embedded in many different activities and actions and was continuous throughout the day. It could be described as a rigid structure designed for behaviour management, but was also used for managing children’s productivity. A blurb on the wall about rewards stated: ‘We earn money for our credit card for working hard and making extra effort’. The awards and rewards could be given either to individuals or to the whole group. So, groups would collect pom-poms (by being quiet as a group, by cleaning up their tables...) and then exchange the collected pom-poms for awards such as watching a movie in the classroom, having a party in the class etc. Individuals would collect money (by completing tasks according to specific criteria, by behaving well...) on their fake credit cards and then spend this money to buy things from a variety of options provided by the teacher (e.g. use a spinning chair, come to school wearing clothes of their own preference instead of a uniform etc.). In the two excerpts below, Tariq and Dorothy describe the system of awards and rewards.

Tariq: It is a kind of a points system and we get to make our own credit cards, like pretend, then if you do something like good then we get like money on it, we just pretend. And then we write it down and then the more money you get like the more things you could spend on like, like the spin chair or a table to sit with friends for a week.

Krystallia: Do you like this system?

Tariq: Em, yes! Cause, if you are working, if you do something good then you know that you will get money on your credit card and you get to save up and get something.

[Interview with Tariq, 02 June 2015]

Tariq referred positively to the advantages that the points system offered to the children. Being rewarded for working hard seemed to be very important for Tariq, because he knew that the harder he worked, the more prizes he could get. Similarly, Dorothy expressed her positive attitude towards rewards, as quoted below.

Krystallia: What is your opinion about the debit cards and the rewards you are getting?

Dorothy: So we use debit cards for really individual rewards that we get and so you might be given 10p on your credit card. And points can be taken off if you aren't good or you are doing something wrong. And there is a reward you can buy and so it means it pays off to me to do well really and that's really good. [...] It's like an encouragement to do well. Because if you know you're gonna get a reward for it then it looks really nice.
[Interview with Dorothy, 08 June 2015]

Dorothy's description focused on individual rewards. She mentioned that, apart from being given money when they do something good, children could also lose money. For example, behaving inappropriately and making mistakes might lead to a fine and reduce the amount of money that children have on their credit cards. Dorothy's understanding of this system was similar to a give-and-take mechanism; she would try to do well in her tasks and, in return, she would be given some money. Furthermore, Dorothy did not perceive rewards as a system of control, but as an encouraging force to aid her individual progress.

The system of rewards and fines is an example of a behaviourist learning approach, based on the stimulus and response dyad, and supporting the principle that rewards and punishment (fines, in this case) bring the desired outcome (Cox, 2011). Here, the desired outcome seemed to be individual progress. As Dorothy put it, this system 'is like an encouragement to do well'. It is interesting to notice that this encouragement did not only involve rewards, but also fines, or, in other words, punishment. Foucault argued that psychology, as a means of curing, is organised around punishment (Foucault, 1988:181); he analysed this assertion by giving examples of the way the therapeutics of madness focused on correcting individuals through punishment, rather than following a holistic approach based on empathy and care (Foucault, 1988). He took his analysis further with questions such as 'How does one punish?' (Foucault, 2002:224) and also with an effort to understand how punishment works. For example, one can notice an interplay between punishment, rewards and people's emotions; this happens, as Foucault put it, 'when fear

is no longer used as a method for arresting movement, but as a punishment; when joy does not signify organic expansion, but reward' (Foucault, 1988:181).

A natural question that arises is: what made children follow and support this system? As we saw in the above examples, children were proponents of the system. As Tariq explained, 'if you are working, if you do something good then you know that you will get money on your credit card and you get to save up and get something'. So, Tariq was happy to work within an environment in which he would be surveilled and monitored, because when he did something good then he was rewarded. So, Tariq's desire for a reward was stronger than his fear of the disappointment following a possible punishment, or the inclination to question why certain things deserve reward and other things or actions don't. This links well with the Foucauldian analysis of power. For Foucault, power does not merely involve repression, but also pleasure (Foucault, 1980). As he illustrated:

'...the notion of repression is quite inadequate for capturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power. (...) If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.' (Foucault, 1980:119)

This productive force of power seemed to drive Tariq's and most children's emotions and thoughts towards the system of fines and rewards. However, not every child was an advocate of this system. An alternative viewpoint is presented in the following example, in which Alastair explains how children were in a sense obliged to try and get some money through the reward system.

Krystallia: I've noticed that you have a credit card and if you do something good you are given some money. Do you enjoy doing the activities more if you know that you will be given some money or do you enjoy the activities in the same way?

Alastair: Well, I don't use my credit card to buy things that often but occasionally I will use it. So I do need money. So if the teacher says 'if you complete this extra task I'll give you maybe 50p on your credit card' I'll do the main task first. But if I go onto the extra task first and there's no like main tasks that have to be completed I'll probably try it and try and get the money.

Krystallia: So do you think that you put more effort on it if you know that you will be given some money?
Alastair: It's probably the same but I do want the money.
[Interview with Alastair, 08 June 2015]

Alastair's description revealed that children did not have the option of not following the reward system, because there were times when they would have to have money. Although Alastair would prefer to complete a main task before spending time on extra activities that would give him money, he would prioritise an extra, money-giving task over spending time on a task that he preferred. Thus, although this system was promoted as one that gave children opportunities to be rewarded for their hard work, one can easily notice that the free choice and flexibility that they were supposed to be given was in truth very limited and constrained. In 'Madness and Civilization', Foucault (1988) referred to the way the movement of madmen was regulated, measured and controlled, as was, in this study, the 'freedom' provided to the children through the reward system. Madness, for Foucault, was linked to childhood, in the sense that madmen were regarded 'as children who have an overabundance of strength and make dangerous use of it. They must be given immediate punishments and rewards' (Foucault, 1988:252).

As Wrigley and Wormwell (2016) remind us, contemporary educational systems do not seem to reflect on the ideas of the progressive tradition in which children's ideas, feelings and interests should be respected and taken on board. Instead, children are asked or forced in direct or indirect ways to adapt to the way the educational system is structured by maintaining a passive stance (Beach, 2007). The use of rewards and fines was an example of a system where 'results are prioritized over processes, numbers over experiences, procedures over ideas, productivity over creativity' (Ball and Olmedo, 2013:91). Linking the analysis of this section to the research questions of this study, one can see how a synergy between structures (the reward system) and cultures (children's support for that system) raised barriers to creativity. It did this because children adopted a passive role; their thoughts, actions, experimentation would be rewarded if and only if they met the teacher's criteria. As the focus was on getting rewards and not on working hard and enjoying the process of learning, children would sometimes work hard up to the point where they had done enough to be rewarded. Finally, it could be argued that the idea of raising effectiveness through rewards and fines and putting individualism and individual

performativity at the core of education also raised structural barriers to creativity (research question 5b).

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the cultural and structural issues that influenced childhood creativity at Little Valley Primary school. By presenting excerpts of interviews with both children and teachers, as well as by giving examples of children's experiences at school as they were reflected in my fieldnotes, I have drawn attention to both the cultural and the structural barriers to creativity. Furthermore, I have given insights on the interplays and intersections between cultural and structural barriers to creativity.

Section 6.2 discussed the way structures operated, creating cultures of exclusion of particular perspectives (e.g. children's views and teachers' views in comparison to those of more senior staff members). I argued that introducing teachers' and children's agency into a rigid system without addressing the politics of participation (Davis and Smith, 2012, Moosa-Mitha, 2005) created cultural barriers to creativity, as there was very limited or no space for children's views to be heard and included in more fluid discourses, such as the co-creation of learning practices.

Section 6.3 drew attention to cultures of decision-making that exclude children. In particular, I demonstrated how creative teaching does not always foster children's creativity. While Scottish policy documents (Education Scotland, 2013, Scottish Executive, 2006) and researchers (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004) highlight the role of the creative teacher and of creative teaching practices used to boost children's creativity, my research shows that this view is not always borne out in practice. More specifically, the analysis of this section showed that creative teaching might sometimes involve rigid, structured and highly prescriptive practices that limit children's agency and block their creativity. In line with researchers who have argued that hierarchy often creates barriers to creativity (Davis et al., 2011), the findings and the analysis of this study demonstrated that authoritarian teaching approaches and rigidly structured learning practices raised cultural barriers to creativity at Little Valley primary school. Another finding of particular importance that was mentioned in this section and is related to cultural barriers to creativity,

is linked to teacher's monitoring approaches. What is particularly interesting about this finding is the inconsistency between teacher's beliefs, namely, that they created flexible practices, and the controlling approach that they tended to maintain in practice. Based on the analysis of the latter, I concluded that teachers' monitoring approaches seemed to be rooted in their worries about children being unable to meet the set standards and finish their work.

Section 6.4 has shown how the way Curriculum for Excellence is interpreted influences creativity in schools. By exploring CfE's multiple identities this section identified links to other research, which demonstrated that creativity does not happen in a vacuum and needs a balance between freedom and rigidity (Davis et al., 2011). More specifically, I have shown how CfE's multiple identities and lack of clear coherence on what is expected of teachers has led to a blurred and unclear landscape, in the sense that schools lacked a distinct plan, strategy and framework for enabling creativity. Furthermore, as researchers remind us, CfE does not refer to learning as chunks, but calls for learning through themes and interdisciplinarity (Priestley et al., 2015, Biesta et al., 2015). Based on that observation, I showed that teachers' intentions to create more flexible learning environments did not always inform their practices, and I concluded that this created barriers to creativity, linked to: 1) the creation of clear boundaries between subjects, 2) the limited timeframes allotted to children to spend on each task, and 3) the cultivation of skills within a tick-box system that does not leave much room for risk-taking and creative exploration.

Section 6.5 has highlighted the importance of understanding the pressures on teachers' and children's work and progress. In this section, I have drawn attention to how expectations placed on teachers to evidence the outcomes of their work raised structural barriers to creativity. I concluded that these barriers were linked to pressures on teachers to work to a rigid, overly evidence-focused 'what works' agenda, and to the knock-on effect of teachers asking children to spend time on meaningless, time-consuming tasks. Furthermore, I have shown that barriers to creativity were raised by pressure from parents, who seemed to recognise the significance of measurable outcomes and created extra responsibilities for teachers. In line with Priestley et al. (2015), this section has shown that effective changes in education should include changes not only in structures, but also in cultures. I added that cultures do not only involve teachers' actions, as Priestley et al. (2015) suggest, but also parental influences. Additionally, this section has explored

structural and cultural barriers to creativity that emerge from the use of ability levels in the classroom, barriers that are linked to 1) the very limited opportunities for children from different ability groups to work together, 2) the considerable emphasis on the quality of outputs and good performance, and 3) the embrace of cultures of self-surveillance and the turn to individualism. Finally, this section has explored barriers to creativity that were linked to the use of a system of external motivation. I used Foucault's analysis of power to analyse how the system of reward and punishment was established and deeply rooted in the culture of this classroom. I then concluded that barriers to children's creativity included children's focus on the outcome instead of the process of learning and the turn to individualism through attempts to increase individual performativity.

Chapter 7: Creativity travels through space: building enabling cultures to creativity

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored the cultural and structural issues surrounding creativity that influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence. More specifically, I showed how structures created cultures of exclusion. I also examined cultures of decision-making that excluded children and argued that creative teaching approaches are not enough for enhancing children's experiences of creativity. Moreover, I concluded that the Curriculum for Excellence is interpreted differently by different people and, thus, appears to have multiple identities which create a lack of coherence as to what is expected of teachers. Therefore, I suggested that the practical introduction and implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence led to a blurred landscape and that schools lacked a clear framework for supporting creativity.

However, my data also suggested that structural barriers can sometimes be overcome by building enabling cultures, so the aim of this chapter is to present a positive note on how enabling cultures were occasionally created. In this chapter, I will examine children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom (research question 1) and how the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence occurs in practice. For example, I will relate children's perspectives to the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice (research question 4). It is important to mention that this chapter presents teachers' and children's attempts to build enabling cultures to creativity; however, despite their efforts, there were also some evident conflicts with that aim. So, the sections of this chapter seek to demonstrate examples of enabling cultures to childhood creativity being successfully implemented, but also to view such approaches from a critical angle.

The chapter begins by presenting children's perspectives on barriers to creativity. It also highlights what needs to be changed if schools are to better enable children's creativity. Section 7.3 examines the importance of viewing space as a dynamic process (Massey,

1994, Christensen et al., 2015) and of paying attention to children's diversities, interactions and relationships. Section 7.4 draws attention to the use of loose parts and to opportunities for adventurous and unstructured play, while section 7.5 shows how opportunities for flexible movement and control over space by children occurred not only in the playground but also indoors. Finally, section 7.6 explores the importance of a balanced approach between freedom and structure (in line with previous literature, e.g. Craft, 2005, Davis et al., 2011), adding to the field the idea that relationships of rapport, respect and trust create enabling cultures which, in turn, support the cultivation of creativity.

7.2 Breaking the barriers of rigid space structures and authority

When I asked children to imagine what creativity would look like in practice if everything were possible, I received a range of answers. Below is an important one for this study, because it combines and synthesises themes that will be the subject of analysis in the present chapter, such as space, adults' authority, age groups and freedom, as illustrated below:

Dorothy: OK, so: the school turned into a massive dinosaur, all the kids run out, the teachers get eaten. OK? So! There's no more teachers! (laughing a lot) And then we see like a P1 and the P1 is riding the school that is like a dinosaur but then we realise that the dinosaur isn't really the school, the school has been eaten by the dinosaur and so the teachers are still inside at the life (...) so then the school turns into a bird and flies out.

Krystallia: Where were the children? Inside or outside?

Dorothy: The children were outside; they were safe from the dinosaur.

Krystallia: Why?

Dorothy: Because the children all grew wings and the wings turned into daffodils and that's why we have so many daffodils, because they are children's wings.

[Interview with Dorothy, 08 June 2015]

Dorothy chose to transform the school space into a massive dinosaur; to something big, powerful and frightening, which threatens the teachers but not the children. It is the younger children who take the power and choose how to 'ride', how to lead this massive creature that has eaten (and, thus, combines) two different types of authority and structure:

the adults' authority and the power structures contained in the school building. The new reality that Dorothy suggested flew out as a bird, which can be connected to feelings of freedom and autonomy. In the end, she argued that children remained safe from the dinosaur because they all grew wings; one can notice that Dorothy chose to transform the new school into a bird, but also to add wings to the children themselves, creating a powerful connection between the school and the children. Children could now, therefore, be seen as the foundation or even the embodiment of the new reality of a creative school, since their – now unneeded – wings have turned into daffodils that are deeply rooted in the ground (the roots of a new educational reality?).

Dorothy stood against regimes of institutionalised and intensively governed childhood, feeling that creativity can only flourish when children are placed at the centre of their learning. The intensive control of childhood that Dorothy attempted to deconstruct in her quote has been mentioned by many scholars. As Rose (1999:122) famously and powerfully argued, 'childhood is the most intensively governed sector of personal experience'. In a similar vein, Prout (2003:16) explained that increased levels of institutional control over children have been found in schools, where one notices a 'tendency towards children's increasing compartmentalisation in specifically designed, separate settings, supervised by professionals and structured according to age and ability'. Schools have therefore become 'machines for learning', which exercise control over children through disciplining each individual in order to control and regulate the whole (Smith, 2014:125). The reaction against teachers' authority that was expressed in Dorothy's story (the dinosaur that ate teachers) is linked to literature which argues that children do experience hierarchy and discrimination by teachers and stakeholders, and that such practices do not support the enhancement of children's creativity (Davis et al., 2011, Davis and Smith, 2012). Finally, age seemed to play an important role in Dorothy's conceptualisation of what creativity means; in her story, Dorothy did not categorise children by age. Her perspective goes against the school-based dominant discourses of developmentalism which rigidly categorise children in age-graded classrooms and pays excessive attention to the milestones of children's development.

This section provided a broad overview of themes that will be subject of more systematic and in-depth analysis in the following sections of the present chapter. Such themes include the notions of age (section 7.3.2), freedom (section 7.6.1), space (section 7.3.1), and

relationships (section 7.6.2), and Dorothy's aforementioned quote/imaginative story was really helpful in summarising key ideas about these dominant themes. Dorothy's quote was also helpful in establishing a link between the previous chapter, which examined the structural and cultural barriers to creativity, and the present chapter, which strikes a more optimistic note about the creation of enabling cultures to creativity in schools. The following sections build on Dorothy's quote, elaborate further on how we can create enabling environments for childhood creativity, and conclude that structural barriers to creativity can be overcome if we build a pedagogy that promotes creativity, flexibility and diversity in spaces of inclusion and participation.

7.3 Dynamic space and diversity

7.3.1 Viewing space as a process and creativity as an embodied practice

This section presents arguments on the role of space and the embodiment of children's creativity. Rhiana's quote, below, discusses her thoughts and feelings in the playground.

Rhiana: Yeah, so they can work together and not just be standing on their own and be like 'Oh, what should I do, I don't feel well, I want to go home'. So they can enjoy school more, so if you are upset and sad in the playground you are not gonna be happy when you are learning inside and when the teacher says get a partner everybody, everybody would go to their friends, but you will be the one standing there that has to do it on their own and that's not really nice. But if you interacted with your year group a lot more ...

Krystallia: Do you think that creativity has also to do with feeling nice?

Rhiana: Yes, because if you feel rubbish and you are on your own you don't feel good, you are not gonna be very creative because you won't be a hundred percent. You won't feel good so you won't be very creative. So say you are on your own, you didn't have any of your friends there, you are on your own, all the time, you wouldn't be, you wouldn't feel creative, you wouldn't feel good. You are just gonna feel on your own or the teacher said I'll do this or I'll do that ... not really upset but kind of lonely. So if you are with your friends you feel like happy and you are gonna be in the best way possibly be creative, because if you are upset you are gonna be lonely you are not gonna be ... if the teacher says do whatever you want in whatever colour you are gonna paint like ... you are not gonna think like oh I'm gonna paint a green monkey you are gonna think, oh I'm just wanna paint a house, I'm gonna do the right colours because that's not very creative, it's just what you think of. But if you are with your friends and you are like happy it will be like, if the teacher says paint something

creative you are gonna think, I am gonna, you are gonna think the wildest thing possible and do it.
[Interview with Rhiana, 08 June 2015]

In the above excerpt, Rhiana talked about children's experiences in indoor or outdoor school spaces. She connected creativity to children's feelings as an outcome of their interactions, mentioning the important role of positive emotions in the cultivation of creativity. For Rhiana, creativity was seen as an embodied practice; children's bodies were placed in the school space, which was not merely perceived as a synthesis of material objects, but as a dynamic entity, influenced by people's social interactions within these spaces.

The meaning of the notions of place and space has been debated in literature, around questions of whether the two notions carry the same meaning and whether they incorporate or exclude people's social interactions (Änggård, 2010, Christensen, 2008). Recent literature argues that space/place is not only about the dimensional aspect of the space, but that it influences and is influenced by human experiences and social relationships (Davis et al., 2011, Wyness, 2003, Änggård, 2010). Therefore, in recent research, space/place has been defined as a process and not as a static entity (Christensen et al., 2015). As (Massey, 1994) illustrates:

'places are made up of the social constellations (local as well as global) that unfold at a given location at a given time, which entails that places do not hold stable identities; rather, they are continuously reconstructed through the social processes that intertwine in a given location' (mentioned in Christensen et al., 2015:591).

Massey (1992:76) has also explained the social construction of space by borrowing arguments from modern physics. As she observes, in modern physics 'the identity of the things is *constituted through* interactions' and 'space is not a flat surface because the social relations which create it are themselves dynamic by their very nature' (Massey, 1992:80). The dynamic character of the social relationships has also to do with power relationships and hierarchy (Davis et al., 2011), which have been described by the term 'power geometry' (Massey, 1992:81). The aforementioned arguments can be used to analyse Rhiana's description. As we saw in the excerpt, Rhiana said: 'so that they can work together and not be standing on their own and be like, oh, what should I do, I don't feel

well, I want to go home'. For Rhiana, children's feelings were very much connected with the space someone is in, where space is constituted by social relationships. For example, as she mentioned, children who do not belong in a social group of friends and who do not feel accepted might want to go back home. In this case, what Rhiana meant by 'home' was not only a three-dimensional object, but a space in which the interactions with others might make a person feel loved, accepted and included. Later on in her narration Rhiana also mentioned that 'if you are upset and sad in the playground you are not gonna be happy when you are learning inside ... everybody would go to their friends, but you will be the one standing there ...' Again, Rhiana connected the environment (whether indoors or outdoors) with children's feelings, as an outcome of their interactions. Therefore, the above data reaffirm the dynamic, fluid and relational interpretation of space. The following paragraph pays more attention to children's interactions and the embodiment of their creativity.

In the above excerpt, Rhiana mentioned that if children are on their own, they might not feel good; they might not be upset, but would just be lonely. Rhiana argued that if children do not feel good, then 'they won't be a hundred percent' and, therefore, they won't be creative. Rhiana also mentioned that if children are with their friends and are happy, then their personal aims won't be restricted to merely finishing off their tasks with the minimum possible effort, but instead, they 'are gonna think the wildest possible thing and do it'. In her description, Rhiana presented creativity as shaped by and dependent on the nature of children's interactions. It has been argued that people's experiences of the world are characterised by embodied practices which are linked to their bodies (Woodyer, 2008, Horton and Kraftl, 2006). Therefore, children's participation in social life and what children 'see, say, think, feel and do' (for example, the loneliness, the bad feelings and the happiness that Rhiana mentioned in her quote) are part of their embodiment (Woodyer, 2008:350).

In the book *'Constructing and Re-constructing Childhood'*, James and Prout (1990) argued that childhood should be studied and understood independently of body's materiality and biological growth. However, later on, Prout (1996, 2000) self-critiqued his previous arguments, saying that the body should be understood both as a material and representational entity. Children's interactions as described by Rhiana might lead to either positive or negative outcomes, and this affects children's experiences of creativity;

therefore, creativity has been described as embodied, through being deeply embedded in children's bodily interactions. This section aimed to elaborate on children's view of creativity as embodied, by using 'the body as a resource in the construction of social relations, meanings and experiences' (Prout, 1996:26). Exploring 'why' and 'when' children experience exclusion is also important, but such questions have been explored in chapter 5 of this thesis.

This section answered research question 1 on children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom. The first part of the section set up the notion of space, arguing that it includes not only dimensions, but also relationships, hierarchies (Davis et al., 2011), and 'power geometry' (Massey, 1992:80). Space was seen as a process (Christensen et al., 2015), which influences and is influenced by human experiences and social relationships (Davis et al., 2011, Wyness, 2003, Änggård, 2010). The analysis of the first part of this section demonstrated that children's feelings and experiences are linked to social relationships and space (where space and social relationships are viewed not as separate entities, but as interconnected). Therefore, extending the discussion to the field of creativity, the environment was perceived as interwoven with children's interactions and relationships, and children's feelings and experiences of creativity as embedded by their very nature in the dynamic aspect of space. Following the analysis of this section, one can conclude that approaches that examine creativity merely as an individual trait appear to be reductionist, since they overlook the important and fundamental influence of environment and relationships and their interconnectedness with the individual. In addition, the second part of the section focused on children's bodies in particular spaces, while the analysis of the data added to the creativity literature the observation that creativity is shaped by and dependent upon children's embodied interactions, in which children's bodies are seen as both material and relational.

7.3.2 Children's differences as cornerstones of their creativity

7.3.2.1 Deconstructing childhood as a homogeneous group and placing children's diversities at the core of creativity

In the following excerpt, Gillean is working on an individual booklet and presents her reflections on a past outdoor activity. For this activity children had been asked by the teacher to explore the park, which was located next to their school, and to take a picture

of what they saw as art. Gillean took a picture of a daisy and explained to me why she made such a choice, as presented below:

Krystallia: Why did you choose the title ‘the lonely daisy’ for your picture?

Gillean: I called it the lonely daisy, because this daisy was by its own.

Krystallia: And why was this art for you?

Gillean: Because this daisy was different. All the daises are usually in groups and this one was alone. So, I guess, this difference made me capture this. This difference is art.

Krystallia: Why do you think that ‘difference is art’?

Gillean: I think ... because ... in the park you can see lots of daises but this one was on its own and if you look at the playground you can see children on their own so ...

[Excerpt from my fieldnotes, 23 April 2015]

Gillean chose to link the meaning of art with the notion of difference. She found the existence of a ‘lonely daisy’ intriguing and decided that this difference made this daisy particularly interesting and close to what Gillean would define as art. Gillean connected the loneliness of the daisy to children who are alone in the playground; she seemed to value children’s varied preferences regarding socialisation and loneliness, placing them under the umbrella of art. It is also worth mentioning that Gillean often worked on her own, not because other children excluded her, but because she preferred to do so.

Gillean’s description embraced diversity and difference, not only as a component of art, but also as a part of children’s identities. The lonely daisy surprised Gillean, because the daisies she usually observed were always in groups. However, this daisy was alone; nevertheless, it was through its uniqueness that it could be defined as art. Linking this view of the daisy with children who are alone in the playground, Gillean shared the thought that children can choose to be alone and to be different. Gillean’s description of the links between art, difference, the daisy and the children, link to theories that see children as a heterogeneous group (Prout and James, 1997, James and James, 2012). Such approaches have critiqued the idea of the universality and homogeneity of childhood and have also problematised dominant views of children as immature, incompetent, incomplete and developing (Woodhead, 2009, Davis, 2011, Davis and Smith, 2012). Similar criticisms have been applied to the lives of disabled children, who are often viewed as a homogeneous group; a group that is ‘passive, vulnerable and in need’ (Davis et al., 2003:192). However, in deconstructing childhood as a homogeneous group we should not

run the risk of viewing age, gender, disability etc. as identity boxes to tick, but as part of a complex and intersectional picture that constructs children's identities. As Connell highlights, there is a danger that deconstructionist theory and movements might turn into a new kind of identity politics (Rasmussen et al., 2014); thus she suggests that we need a theory 'that acknowledges the world's multiple experiences' and 'builds on the differing intellectual traditions and contemporary efforts at understanding around the globe' (Connell, 2010:608).

It has been argued that viewing children as a diverse and heterogeneous group supports effective learning practices (Ang and Flewitt, 2015). Ang and Flewitt (2015:146) illustrated the importance of embracing the expression of children's diverse identities, arguing that 'children's experience of diversity and difference constantly evolves and equips them with varying degrees of cultural and social capital from which they are able to negotiate their understanding of the world'. The recognition of children's diversity as a positive thing has also been highlighted in research on creativity, which argues that diversity and creativity are interconnected and that diversity fosters creativity (Davis, 2013).

Although there is strong research evidence that supports the need to embrace the heterogeneity of children's experiences and to critically examine rigid categorisations of stages in childhood, it seems that such arguments have very little impact on the organisation of children's daily lives in schools. Connell (2014:345) suggests that queer theory may be able to illuminate educational policies and practices which enforce brutalities of exclusion and inclusion and are driven by a powerful desire for school cultures of 'testing-and-ranking-and-selecting-and-excluding'. Such a move would of course require wider recognition of the importance of diversity, and collective action by all the different stakeholders, to create enabling environments for the expression of children's differences. The following section presents a discussion of age, giving the example of how the 'Little Valley' Primary School created opportunities for children of different age groups to work together.

7.3.2.2 Working with children from different age groups fosters creativity

Different children had different perspectives on collaboration with different age groups and the effects of this on their creativity. Alastair supported the idea that older children are more creative than younger ones, as we see below:

Alastair: Well, younger kids can have good, creative ideas too but because older kids like they've had more experience to learning and everything. But I am not saying little kids have bad ideas. But older kids it's more likely that they're gonna have better ideas just because they've been learning and doing creative stuff for longer.

[Interview with Alastair, 08 June 2015]

According to Alastair, older children are more creative, because, as he mentioned, they have more experience, having been learning and doing creative stuff for longer. To some extent, Alastair's perspective shares common ground with perspectives from developmental psychology which involve 'mental measurement, classification of abilities and the establishment of norms' (Burman, 2008:14). Children's development has often been rigidly categorised within age-based schemata (James and James, 2012) and schools in many countries divide children into age-based classes according to the expected uniformity of each age group (James and James, 2012, James, 2005).

However, other children had different views and most children argued that interactions with children from different age groups were positive for everyone's creativity. For example, Harry mentioned that 'having every single kid involved makes you super, really creative'. In the following examples, Gillean and Rhiana explain how such interactions were implemented in their school, and how such processes fostered children's creativity.

Krystallia: What is creativity for you?

Gillean: I think ... we have the whole school topics and we usually ... I think every year we do one topic that the whole school is and I think that's quite good because we can all like link each other so if we were with younger groups like the younger children would be doing the same thing and we can discuss it.

[Interview with Gillean, 02 June 2015]

Creativity for Gillean seemed to be a process of interaction, as well as of collaboration with children from different age groups. As she mentioned, given that everyone would be working on the same topic, children could be involved in dialogic processes. Gillean did

not seem to worry about developmental differences emerging from children's membership of different age groups. Instead, she viewed the collaboration across different age groups as a communally lived and constructed creative experience. This view links to approaches that see age as a fluid notion and as part of children's social identities (Hockey and James, 2002), whereby identity is something 'emerging out of and through people's social relationships' (Hockey and James, 2002:6).

In a similar vein, Rhiana described the process of working with her buddies (children from P1), which she characterised as a creative process.

Rhiana: Sometimes, like when we were making bugs with our buddies and you think that if I was making a bug I would normally just put two eyes, legs ... but some of them are really creative like burying the bugs because bugs are underground. If you were making a house they actually thought about: wait, where do the bugs live, a bug doesn't live in a house, a bug lives underground so I'm gonna make an underground house. Or hmm ... what could I use? And they use really creative things like you would never think to use sticks as eyes but then they would take sticks and put them as eyes and then put things on the sticks and then do those balls of plasticene; some make really creative, interesting, imaginative bugs. Because they didn't really think oh, because I really like bugs I'm gonna make my bug with these many legs but they didn't have like a plan, they just went with it saying oh, I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna do that. They were really creative.

[...]

...they need freedom, you need to give them some freedom. We can't be as strict and say you have to put these as legs and these as eyes and this is the body ... you have to like ... so sort of kind of guide them.

[Interview with Rhiana, 08 June 2015]

As we see from the above example, Rhiana did not feel superior to her buddies because of being older. Instead, she presented their collaborative work as a process of learning from each other. She described her experiences of observing young children's way of working and characterised it as replete with imagination and unusual choices. For example, Rhiana was surprised to see how her buddies were treating their creations as real animals and tried to create underground houses for them. Rhiana was also surprised to see young children challenging the norms and feeling free to experiment. For example, they would act without having set out a plan, simply following their inclinations. Rhiana acknowledged the differences between younger and older children, but she did not value any age group more or see it as being better, more experienced etc. Therefore, Rhiana's experiences were not constructed through the gaze of age-based developmentalism. As Christensen (1999:30,

mentioned in James, 2005:253) argued, “‘childhood’ unfolds, empirically, through ‘children’s experiences, understandings and practices ... [and the] multiple, different forces ... that influence their lives’”. Therefore, Rhiana’s view of creativity involved a process of interacting with children from different age groups, in which age was viewed as a process of belonging to a community (Skattebol, 2006).

To sum up, sections 7.3.3.1 and 7.3.3.2 concluded that age was not always seen as a barrier to children’s collaboration with others from different age groups, but was often perceived as an enabling factor to children’s creativity through dialogue and the creation of shared experiences (research question 1). Children deconstructed the ‘hegemonic discourse of childhood’ (Robinson and Jones-Diaz, 2006:171) by taking advantage of opportunities to work with children of different age groups and learn from each other’s diverse experiences through dialogue and co-creation. Therefore, the data of section 7.3.3 suggest that opportunities for children to work with others from diverse groups, such as age groups, need to be further promoted and implemented in practice in order to improve and enhance children’s experiences of creativity.

7.4 Loose parts, adventurous experiences, play and creativity

7.4.1 Designing a new playground: co-creating the space, adding loose parts and promoting flexibility

This section draws on the findings of previous sections on the social and dynamic aspect of space (Massey, 1992), on the heterogeneity of children’s experiences (Prout and James, 1997, James and James, 2012), and on the view of age as a fluid notion which is part of people’s identities and relationships (Hockey and James, 2002). This section aims to synthesise such views and to suggest possible ways of putting such ideas into practice, through exploring new, upcoming developments in the playground area of ‘Little Valley’ Primary School. In the following excerpt, Rhiana explains why such developments (i.e. the introduction of loose parts) are important for children:

Krystallia: What do you think about the loose parts that you are going to have in your playground?

Rhiana: I think it is a really good idea because you can ... other children can really socialise because there's going to be a certain amount of loose parts. So if everybody wants to play with the tire you are gonna figure out a way of doing it together and that will probably mean playing with younger pupils or older pupils instead of just saying you are gonna have this, I'm gonna have this. Because this is not gonna go around 500 pupils, because we are not gonna have that much things so ... we are gonna think of a way to go round and have all the people that want to play with the loose parts.

Krystallia: So do you think that this will enhance the interaction between the pupils?

Rhiana: Yeah, I think it is a really good idea for children to socialise and play with older pupils or younger pupils. So instead of being on your own playing things that you don't really like, like everybody gets with their friends so there is lots of them so they can get lots of things. You are gonna be on your own, kind of, not really anybody to play with, you are just gonna be on your own. You won't know what to do.

[Interview with Rhiana, 08 June 2015]

Rhiana argued that the introduction of loose parts (loose parts are open-ended materials that can be constructed, manipulated, and transformed through self-directed play – for more details see Nicholson, 1972) will give children the opportunity to socialise with people from different age groups and to get to play with others if they do not have any friends. She also argued that loose parts will encourage children to play and collaborate with others based on their common interests; therefore, children will not necessarily be staying in the same, fixed groups. This could break down the age barriers, as children from different age groups will be able to work together.

Loose parts would then act as enabling factors for children to be part of and to create the playground space as an environment in which age and other markers of difference would be viewed as a process of belonging to a community (Skattebol, 2006). Therefore, loose parts could serve as means of connecting children without creating barriers and separating them by age and ability groups, as happens in their classrooms. Such an approach would push the boundaries in a different direction from age-based developmentalism (Burman, 2008, James, 2005) towards a different destination: that of a dynamic and social, co-creative space, one created by and for the children through the use not only of their bodies, but also of other material objects (in this case the loose parts).

The creation of a space with loose parts was an idea that came from children. After spending a day playing with loose parts that were displayed to them by a team invited to

the school by the headteacher, children expressed their desire to play with loose parts on a daily basis. This idea was welcomed by the teachers and the headteacher and children were actively involved in the process of designing the playground. In the initial planning stage, the teacher placed 3 large pieces of paper on the tables in the project room and children were encouraged to go there at any time and write down objects they wanted to have added to the playground, besides giving answers to other related questions. Some of their responses are displayed below:

Why do we want loose parts?

- To make dens
- To have more activities during breaks
- To help with group work
- So little ones learn to share
- So P1s can know more for their future
- Have more exciting things to do in the playground

Loose parts we could ask for:

- planks of wood
- tires
- rope
- buckets
- netting
- pieces of fabric
- spoons
- old keyboards
- car parts
- net
- water bottles

Who can we ask for loose parts?

- B&Q
- Ikea
- Rory's dad (he is a roofer)
- Homebase
- The Plange
- builders

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Thursday 23 April 2015]

Also, Calum explained to me how the children (with teachers' support and encouragement) planned to persuade people to donate loose parts to them:

Calum: We wrote a letter and we had to use persuasive phrases like your place is the perfect to help out and stuff like that and I think this was a brilliant idea because sometimes the playground can be a little bit boring ...

but with the loose parts you have like ropes and we can use them to make like dens and stuff like that.
[Interview with Calum, 04 June 2015]

Apart from adding loose parts, children were encouraged by the teacher to propose ideas about thematic spaces. Some of the ideas they came up with were hula hoop, skipping rope and storytelling spaces. Pia suggested that every child should be encouraged to contribute his/her ideas by being asked questions such as ‘Which sport do you want to do?’ and ‘What books do you want to read?’

The above excerpts indicate that children were involved in decision-making processes and participation from the very early stages of planning, which is still unusual for many Scottish schools (Brown et al., 2017). The headteacher’s initiative to provide children with opportunities to experiment with loose parts was followed by the children’s enthusiasm for using loose parts on a daily basis and by the teacher’s attempts to encourage them to be actively involved in the decision-making process.

In practice, however, the full implementation of participation is not easy, as it faces complexities and barriers, according to many scholars. As Prout (2003:21) highlighted, ‘children’s participation is a subject high in rhetoric but sometimes low in practical application’. Some difficulties and barriers include tick-box approaches to participation (Davis, 2011), considerable attention paid to building a what-works agenda (Malone and Hartung, 2010), and little reflection on other dynamic aspects underpinning participation, such as the effects of power and relationships (Tisdall and Davis, 2004).

In the context of ‘Little Valley’ Primary School, children’s participation might have been a one-off event (Davis and Hill, 2006). I did not observe any other instances of children having the chance to be involved from the very early stages of planning and to have their ideas heard in regard to their needs and concerns (Percy-Smith, 2010). However, having this opportunity to actively participate in the design of the playground, and being able to ask for loose parts, boosted children’s enthusiasm and enabled them to be participants in dialogue in their own right (Cairns, 2006). In line with other research, the involvement of children in the participatory process created ‘a sense of togetherness embodied in people’s interactions, relationships and shared meaning-making’ (Birch et al., 2017:233).

This section answers research question 4, by stating: the CfE's aim to be more enabling and to promote children's choice can be put into practice through the use of loose parts, but also through the process of redesigning the playground. From the children's point of view, loose parts enhanced their collaboration and enabled children of all ages to play together, breaking down the structures of age categorisation. It has been argued that working with others from diverse backgrounds enhances people's creativity (Davis et al., 2011), and the use of loose parts is an example of how opportunities for children from diverse age groups can be created and implemented. In addition, the aim of the CfE to promote children's choice was implemented through the process of co-creation of space, when children were involved in the decision-making process and participated from the early stages of planning. Their suggestions were taken into account, including the suggestion to create thematic spaces. The next section sheds more light on children's play in outdoor spaces and their views on the use of loose parts.

7.4.2 Playing with loose parts fosters children's creativity

The upcoming introduction of loose parts to the school playground was perceived very positively by the children, who mentioned various benefits to their daily lives at school. Alastair emphasised opportunities for children to learn outdoors, as noted below:

Alastair: It is still learning, different learning. You are not stuck in a room, you have more freedom.
[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 1 April 2015]

Other children linked loose parts with opportunities for free play and experimentation with different materials and activities:

Alice: I think it's very fun, the children find it more interesting. Because now we do have a very good playground but I think it would make it very nicest for everyone if they had something to play with instead of having to share things out.
[Interview with Alice, 09 June 2015]

In like manner, Dorothy argued:

Dorothy: The loose parts, is really about...because you've seen our playground, it's where we are playing...and we are getting new things in

the playground. But the loose parts is really feeding creativity. So you can make dens, you can build fairy houses or you can do whatever.
[Interview with Dorothy, 08 June 2015]

Children's right to play has been established in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Shackel, 2015). Article 31 mentions that state parties 'recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts' (Shackel, 2015:49). However, Article 31 is not always put into practice; a recent Scottish report argues that there is still a long way to go in order to provide 'a consistent, comprehensive and inclusive approach to the implementation of Article 31 in Scotland' (Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, 2014:1).

The challenges encountered in implementing Article 31 can vary, including arguments that problematise the premise that every child enjoys free choice and free play (Wood, 2014), as well as debates revealing the complexities of what play is and how quality play is experienced by children (Shackel, 2015). The introduction of loose parts at 'Little Valley' Primary School was welcomed by most, if not all, the children I talked to. According to the aforementioned excerpts, playing with loose parts is fun and interesting, as Alice mentioned, and provides different opportunities for learning outside the strict boundaries of the classroom, as Alastair illustrated. The benefits of such opportunities for outdoor play have also been pointed out by research studies that highlight benefits to children's emotional well-being, as well as more opportunities to participate in imaginative play and greater autonomy when choosing play activities (Clements, 2004).

The main idea in the renovation of the 'Little Valley' Primary School playground was to add loose parts that children could use to improve their experiences of play. However, recent research has emphasised that the conditions for children's involvement in play are not necessarily improved when playgrounds are remodelled and refurbished (Holt et al., 2013). This negative result is seen primarily when the refurbishment is limited to adding fixed play structures and manufactured equipment that restrict children's initiative and imagination (Holt et al., 2013, Dymont and Connell, 2013). By contrast, loose parts were not perceived by children as limited and rigid. As Dorothy argued, 'loose parts feed creativity' and can be used by children to 'make dens, build fairy houses and do whatever'. Therefore, loose parts were perceived as enablers of children's autonomy, providing

opportunities for children to use them to experiment and create new play structures. As research argues, providing transportable and varied equipment not only helps children be more actively engaged in play, but also encourages them to shape their play preferences (Hyndman et al., 2016). The use of loose parts is a good example of practical implementation of such ideas/proposals.

Children often linked creativity with opportunities to play in unstructured settings, and risk-taking and adventurous experiences played a key role in that type of activity, as Calum explains below:

Krystallia: How do you think the most creative moment in the school could be? It could be something real, it could be something imaginative ...

Calum: Oh, there's loads! Anything, like if we had a massive, adventurous playground with like ... we've got a secret garden that's quite cool and like massive mazes and stuff like that, that would be really cool.

Krystallia: Do you feel more creative outside than inside?

Calum: Well, the school is making a new playground, once we leave ... but yeah, I think being outside ... like, the P6s are there today and you make like dens using stuff around you, that's really fun and we also learn stuff when we do things like that.

[Interview with Calum, 04 June 2015]

Calum linked creativity with opportunities to be outside the classroom and learn whilst having fun through playing and exploring an outdoor space conducive to adventurousness. However, provision of such opportunities is not always common practice in schools, the reason being adults' continuous and tight supervision due to fears about children's safety (Prout, 2003). It has been argued that such fears are extreme and not always reasonable (Gleave, 2008, Sandseter and Sando, 2016). A literature review conducted for Play England suggests that risky play is both beneficial and attractive to children and that children have sufficient skills to manage risk when playing (Gleave, 2008). In addition, research carried out in Norway demonstrates that a sensible focus on children's safety is reasonable, while excessive control of children's play limits their physical challenges and has destructive effects on their risk management abilities (Sandseter and Sando, 2016). Therefore, the provision of more flexible structures in schools would not only assist children's risk management competencies, but also boost their creativity by arousing their curiosity and eagerness to explore and to take and manage risks in adventurous and unexpected/unfamiliar circumstances.

This section can answer research question 1 (What are children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom?), by stating: children argued that the introduction of loose parts would boost their creativity, by providing them with opportunities to play in flexible structures, and to experiment, explore, shape their play preferences and take risks. The opportunity for children to play with loose parts served as an example of dismantling tight adult supervision and control (Prout, 2003, Sandseter and Sando, 2016), thus increasing children's autonomy in choosing play activities (Clements, 2004) and encouraging them to shape their play preferences (Hyndman et al., 2016). Therefore, children's perspectives linked creativity with opportunities to play and to learn in unstructured settings; the use of loose parts opens up space for dialogue on how such opportunities can be built in primary schools, not only in playground spaces, but also in other school spaces (which is the focus of the following section).

7.5 Flexible use of space fosters children's creativity

The previous section described children's perspectives on creativity as experienced through play and experimentation in the playground. Although one would usually expect such flexible settings to be found in outdoor spaces, 'Little Valley' Primary School promoted a culture in which children from Primary 7 were able to obtain some control over decisions on the use of space. More specifically, children were often allowed to choose the space of their preference during the school day. As Fatima shared with me, '... it is good for us to move around instead of being in the classroom'. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes presents some of my reflections and children's thoughts about having the flexibility to move around.

Alice approached me and asked if I wanted to join her and her group in the corridor outside the classroom, where they had planned to work together on a group task. I immediately felt quite baffled, as I didn't know what Alice's suggestion entailed; did she think that I would act as a teacher who would give children permission to work outside the classroom and be responsible for their safety? My experience from the Greek educational system was quite different, as children could not exit the classroom without asking permission from the teacher. When I explained this to Alice, her answer was surprising to me; Alice told me that children from P7 at 'Little Valley' Primary School did not have to ask permission for leaving the classroom, because teachers trusted them. So, they could work in different spaces of

their own preference: inside the classroom, outside the classroom, in the project room, or in other school spaces. Alice told me that children feel very happy that teachers trust them, because this helps them be independent. I was impressed by the degree of flexibility that children had in order to achieve the daily aims. Although the teacher did not tightly supervise them, children seemed motivated, focused and independent, in the sense that they were responsible for their actions.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, 3 March 2015]

The above excerpt sheds light on the structure of children's daily experiences at 'Little Valley' Primary School. In her research, Devine (2002) discussed tight surveillance of children in schools and mentioned that forms of control over children succeed by controlling time and space. As Devine (2002:312) argued, the control of time and space is part of a broader structure of surveillance in schools, which defines children's 'experience of education in relatively narrow and instrumental terms'. In a similar vein, Gallagher (2004:38) explored the geography of power in schools and argued that 'on entering the school, pupils are habituated into prescribed time-space paths, which soon become routine'. Disciplinary power has also been linked to the physical design of the school spaces; as argued, 'disciplinary spacing is part of the architectural character of schools, both in the separation of classrooms and in the regulated spacing of desks that is often found inside them' (Giddens, 1984:135, mentioned in Gallagher, 2004).

However, the structure of the school spaces did not seem to greatly affect children's experiences of disciplinary power; the reason was partly that children were – to some extent – able to control space. As Alice explained in the above excerpt, children could work in different spaces and teachers trusted them to do so. In Gallagher's words (2004:34), 'though the space may lend itself to the reproduction of surveillance practices, such practices can also be challenged, resisted or transformed within the same space'. Confirming this argument, children's experiences in this P7 classroom at 'Little Valley' Primary School did not always seem to be restricted by disciplinary barriers imposed and reproduced through the control of space. Instead, the culture that was created by teachers and children increased the degree of children's autonomy and there were times when there was no need for teachers to try to control space in order to discipline children. Sharing responsibility for the control of space fostered children's independence and motivation for work, so that temporary disciplinary techniques, such as quietening practices (see Gallagher, 2004) were usually not employed by the teacher. However, having the

opportunity to control space was only part of the picture; as we saw in chapter 6 of this thesis, the teacher had imposed a system of rewards and fines, as well as a system that categorised children by their ability level. So the flexibility created when children had some control of space needs to be viewed as part of the whole picture, which was not consistent but included contradictory aspects.

Opportunities for children to work in spaces of their preference influenced their experiences of creativity. As many children mentioned, creativity can be enhanced if they have opportunities to work in spaces that inspire them, such as quiet spaces, outdoor spaces, etc. Quiet spaces were preferred by children who perceived creativity as an individual trait, as mentioned by Hassan and Gillean, below:

Hassan: There is the project room from our class the ... the other door. You can work there with friends when you feel ... if you feel fast or there's too much stuff in your head you could work alone so there's no noise.
[Interview with Hassan, 03 June 2015]

Similarly, Gillean argued:

Gillean: I quite like our project room because it looks quiet and not everyone is always in there. So I like that we have the two spaces because if it gets a bit noisy and you can't concentrate you can just go somewhere quieter. So I think I can concentrate when there is not many people.
[Interview with Gillean, 02 June 2015]

Hassan and Gillean indicated a preference for working in quiet spaces. Hassan mentioned that 'if you feel fast or there's too much stuff in your head you could work alone so there's no noise', while Gillean commented that 'if it gets a bit noisy and you can't concentrate you can just go somewhere quieter'. Therefore, they both liked working in quiet spaces, such as the project room, and they also valued the ability to move in spaces of their preference when they felt the need to do so. It has been argued that it is empowering for children to be involved in decisions on the use of space in schools (Devine, 2002). The data of this research also suggest that opportunities for children to have their views heard (e.g. regarding the use of space) affect their experiences of creativity. For example, Hassan and Gillean who perceived creativity as an act mainly focused on the individual, were able to work in spaces that provided them with good conditions for working individually. The findings of the CREANOVA project suggested that there is a number of types of

environments that enable creativity, e.g. flexible environments or environments with supportive frameworks/rules (Davis et al., 2011, Davis et al., 2012). The present thesis complemented this research by showing that children's choices of space varied and demonstrating how children experienced creativity in different spaces, such as the ones mentioned below.

Many children valued highly the interaction with outdoor spaces. For example, during the interview process Olivia commented, 'I really like working in the learning system base (on the ground floor) because it is really nice because there is a wall of windows and you can see out the playground', and Alastair said, 'I quite like working through there because it's got a lot of windows and I don't know, I just like working there, it helps me think'. Being able to have visual contact with outdoor spaces or to work outside was important for fostering creativity, according to many children. In the excerpt below, Arisha describes her thoughts about the most creative thing that could happen in a school:

Arisha: So basically, I think yesterday or two days before we did a buddy activity and then we were with our buddies outside to make a play doc creature. So I think it was really good because you have a lot of things all around you so you can make a creature and the stones might be eyes, the sticks might be legs, the leaves might be hair, you just get inspiration from outside. I think outside is the most ... because you can just get ... you know pick things from the ground, stick them on ...
[Interview with Arisha, 02 June 2015]

In the above excerpt, Arisha connected creativity to working outdoors. As she mentioned, children get inspiration from outside by exploring new spaces and using a variety of materials that are available outdoors. Arisha's perception of creativity is also in line with research in the field of creativity that highlights the importance of working in a physical environment for the cultivation of children's creativity (Mayesky, 2002). In addition, in their book *'The creative school'*, Jeffrey and Woods (2003:26) argued that some children experience schools as 'alien, imprisoning places' that separate them from the natural environment. Jeffrey and Woods (2003) also argued that children's creativity is fostered when teachers create opportunities for both indoor and outdoor learning.

Arisha's view of creativity links with previous research in the field of creativity in the sense that working outdoors boosts children's creativity. Drawing on Arisha's suggestion,

we can see that outdoor spaces helped children experience creativity because of the plethora of unusual materials that can be found outdoors but not in their classrooms. However, in contrast to previous research which argued that it is teachers' responsibility to provide opportunities for outdoor learning (Jeffrey and Woods, 2003), my study also suggests that teachers could contribute to creating environments that support children's creativity by asking for children's views and taking their suggestions into account. Indeed, as the data of this section demonstrated, children themselves had a clear idea of what type of environment helped them experience creativity, and their creativity was enhanced when teachers enabled and encouraged them to work in the environments they preferred.

Teachers at 'Little Valley' Primary School created opportunities for children to work outdoors throughout the year. In fact, in mid-April, Juliet announced to the children that they would have the opportunity to work outdoors (in the park next to their school) every week. The following excerpt presents an example of how outdoor learning was exercised in practice:

Today, the theme of the outdoor learning was related to art. Before leaving the classroom, children were asked to create a frame made of paper. When in the park, Juliet encouraged children to imagine what art is for them and asked them to search something that depicts that; they encouraged children to experiment and be creative. Children started walking around, alone or in groups; occasionally they would stop and glance throughout their frame from different angles. When they had decided which shot best described their idea of the meaning of art, they then would borrow an iPad and take a picture of it. Many discussions occurred between children, who discussed their ideas of what art means to them. When they returned back to the classroom, Juliet printed out all the pictures and children used them as a base to express their ideas about art.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Tuesday 21 April 2015]

The above excerpt gives an example of how outdoor learning was shaped for the children of P7 at 'Little Valley' Primary School. I chose to present this excerpt because the teacher often mentioned to me that this was one of the most creative lessons she had ever planned, mainly because it combined outdoor learning with exploring meanings of art through taking photos. It has been argued that creativity cannot thrive in formally structured and inflexible spaces (Davis et al., 2011); in line with this argument, opportunities for outdoor learning that provided some degree of flexibility had the potential to boost children's creativity. However, the provision of flexible spaces might not always be enough to

enhance children's experiences of creativity. For example, in the aforementioned excerpt, flexible use of space was also combined with children's active involvement and freedom to discover (Woods, 1995).

The importance of encouraging children's active involvement within flexible spaces has been particularly emphasised by and promoted through outdoor learning literature. For example, the report entitled 'My world outdoors' (2016) emphasised the need for schools to include daily opportunities for children to spend time outdoors, to explore the natural environment, and to move between indoor and outdoor environments. The CfE aimed to provide a framework for enabling learner-led approaches in outdoor spaces (APS Group Scotland, 2013). However, although outdoor learning has been a central aspect of early years education (Care Inspectorate, 2016), it seemed to be a 'treat' rather than a fully embedded approach in teaching and learning practices at 'Little Valley' Primary School. Therefore, since both teachers and children acknowledge the importance of outdoor learning in primary schools, there is a need for fully embedding practices that promote flexible and frequent use of outdoor spaces in children's everyday school life.

Summing up and answering research question 1, children's perspectives on creativity were closely linked to the use of space in the sense that flexible use of space fosters creativity. It has been argued that space is often controlled in schools, as part of a broad culture of surveillance (Devine, 2002), and that creativity cannot thrive in formally structured and inflexible spaces (Davis et al., 2011). Despite the barriers to flexibility that might be associated with spatial rigidity, it has been illustrated that surveillance practices can be challenged and transformed (Gallagher, 2004); in the present research this occurred through opportunities that promoted children's autonomy, choice and control over decisions on the use of space. The data of this study illustrate that opportunities for children to control space affect their experiences of creativity. Research has suggested that there is a number of types of environment that enable creativity (Davis et al., 2011, Davis et al., 2012) and my thesis showcased a variety of spaces that enabled childhood creativity, according to children's own perspectives. For example, some of the spaces children preferred were quiet spaces, while some enabled interaction with outdoor spaces.

Previous research in the field of creativity argued that teachers should be responsible for providing opportunities for outdoor learning (Jeffrey and Woods, 2003). However, my

findings suggest that children are able to contribute to decision-making processes aimed at fostering spaces of creativity and that therefore, there is a need for children's views to be heard and valued in such processes.

Outdoor learning was often viewed by children as enabling their creativity, but it was not fully embedded in everyday practices at 'Little Valley' Primary School. My study highlighted a need for primary schools to promote frequent and flexible outdoor-learning practices and to provide more consistent opportunities for children to obtain some control over the use of space at this school. By connecting this conclusion to the use of a system of awards/fines and the rigid categorisation of children by their 'ability', as described in chapter 6 of this thesis, I am able to conclude that flexible use of outdoor space was intermittent, inconsistent, influenced by deficient ideas of child development, contradictory, associated with adult power tools (e.g. reward and punishment) and therefore, not provided as of right. Finally, since flexible use of space is implemented in early childhood settings (Care Inspectorate, 2016), a question that naturally arises is: why should we wait for P7 to allow flexible use of space by children, rather than promoting a continuation of this approach throughout children's educational path?

This section explored the flexible use of space in both outdoor and indoor spaces. The next section continues to explore the use of flexibility, but this time it focuses on flexibility in teaching and learning practices.

7.6 Freedom, trust, inclusive relationships and creativity

7.6.1 Creativity flourishes in environments that provide a balanced approach between freedom and structure

Many children associated creativity with freedom and opportunities to take the initiative and exert some degree of control over their learning. For example, when asked what creativity was, Dorothy said:

Dorothy: Creativity is the freedom to express yourself in a piece of work.
It's ... to put your own spin on things! It's not like a work-sheet answering

a question a,b,c. It really means that you get a better understanding of things.
And it's better than a plain worksheet.
[Interview with Dorothy, 08 June 2015]

Dorothy perceived creativity as a process that gives children the freedom to express themselves and 'put their own spin on things'. Furthermore, she emphasised the importance of obtaining knowledge and understanding, which, as she mentioned, is preferable to giving answers to questions on standardised work-sheets. It has been argued that having the freedom to experiment, on the basis that you possess the necessary skills and knowledge, fosters creativity (NACCCE, 1999). Dorothy's view of creativity expands this statement, as she did not consider knowledge/understanding as requirements for being creative; instead, she viewed freedom, understanding and creativity as interconnected elements forming the creative process.

Paying closer attention to freedom, we note arguments that too much freedom is problematic when seeking to foster creativity (Davis et al., 2011); the following examples show how creativity was implemented through balancing freedom and structure. When Harry was asked about his perspective on creativity, he offered an example of a project he was working on, saying:

Harry: Well, the Canada posters that we've just been doing were really creative and fun just because it was really what we wanted to do, not like having something set to do. We could just write what we wanted to do and stuff like that ... if there was something already set for you to do you wouldn't let your imagination flow.
[Interview with Harry, 08 June 2015]

As Harry mentioned, the Canada posters were creative, because children had the freedom to design them as they wanted and this enabled children's imagination to flow. However, designing the Canada posters did not represent complete freedom, but also entailed some degree of guidance and structure, as Dorothy explained:

Dorothy: So we were all told to make a poster advertising Canada and you've got to go anywhere you wanted to go. You could do anything you wanted to do. The only thing you had to do was to have four reasons why you should visit Canada and make it look nice.
Krystallia: So what did you add in your poster?

Dorothy: I put quite a bit of information at the bottom but I tried to keep it separate from the big things. I did a big Visit Canada at the top, I did a maple leaf and I did two little tag-lines.

Krystallia: What kind of information did you choose to put there?

Dorothy: I was trying to think what I would like to know if I was gonna visit Canada. So, obviously there's destinations, food, animals, you know a bit about the history.

Krystallia: Did you feel creative during doing that?

Dorothy: Yeah.

Krystallia: Why?

Dorothy: Because after you were given those guidelines you were allowed to create whatever you wanted for the poster and there wasn't a set of rules about how exactly this should look like, there were guidelines of what would make it look good. But you could just put your own spin on it and I really liked that.

Krystallia: Do you feel creative when you have the freedom to choose how you want to do something?

Dorothy: Yeah, because I enjoy being given choice. Because everyone in the class is gonna turn out with a different idea and it means ... you know, you just get to really see everyone's different ideas and ... you do feel creative when you get a certain amount of choice on what you do.

[Interview with Dorothy, 08 June 2015]

Dorothy chose to bring her Canada poster with her to the interview as a prompt that would help her explain her thoughts on what creativity is. She argued that working on this activity made her feel creative because, as she stated, 'there wasn't a set of rules about how exactly this should look like, there were guidelines of what would make it look good' and children had 'a certain amount of choice'. She mentioned that children could choose to write about any place in Canada and also could propose activities of their own preference. The only guideline they had to follow was to include four reasons why someone should visit Canada. The guidelines for the creation of the Canada posters balanced freedom and structure, establishing important conditions for enhancing creativity (Craft, 2005, Chappell, 2007, Jindal-Snape et al., 2013). Following Dorothy's reflection on how she structured her poster helps us obtain a clear picture of the way structure and freedom were interwoven, creating a self-reflexive process in which children posed questions on what to include and how best to present information. This process clearly helped children to be actively engaged with knowledge, instead of following instructions and feeling disengaged from the learning process.

In addition to the above, children were sometimes encouraged to make choices according to their interests, as Calum explains below:

Krystallia: Do you want to begin by explaining to me what this activity is?
Calum: Well, I brought this activity that we did where we have to make a big ... box and it could be the scare factor or the nice factor and then you will draw a little thing and then at the bottom you would have questions and you would have about six or nine and you've had to find which one, ehm ... for example: I think, blank, is the best footballer because this footballer has been noted as the fastest. So then you look for ... which one is the fastest and ... yeah ... and then the answer is at the back. So that's what we did there.

Krystallia: Is this a game?

Calum: This is like a game but we have to involve maths and stuff like that so ...

Krystallia: Did you choose football?

Calum: Yeah, I chose football players. There is like, there's a game called FIFA and that's quite cool because it has stats and stuff. So I chose that.

Krystallia: So the activity was about making a game?

Calum: Yeah, a game and then you have to answer questions.

Krystallia: And why do you think this is creative?

Calum: I really liked it because it was different because we had to use a key, we had to think of our own things; it was really cool and different.

[Interview with Calum, 04 June 2015]

Calum chose to bring the aforementioned activity to the interview, in order to explain to me what creativity meant to him. As he mentioned, the aim of the activity was to obtain a better understanding of statistics. For this purpose, children were asked to create an individual activity that involved comparisons between fractions. In particular, they were asked to find some characteristics (relevant to the theme of their project) that were expressed as percentages (or, equivalently, as fractions with the denominator 100). This instruction was the same for everyone, but each child had the opportunity to choose the theme of his/her project. For example, some children chose to write about animals, others about sports, music etc. Calum chose to create an activity about famous footballers.

The aforementioned activity chosen by Calum is an example of actively engaging children and involving their interests in the learning process. It has been argued that such initiatives, which connect learning to children's interests, increase their motivation and make learning more meaningful and creative (Craft, 2005, Jeffrey, 2008, Craft et al., 2014). Juliet clearly described the aim of the activity but at the same time provided opportunities for children to take the initiative and shape parts of the activity. This also links to arguments in progressive pedagogy literature. More specifically, it has been argued that practices based on theories of progressive pedagogy encourage learners to bring their own interests and

passions to the learning process, so that learning becomes more than a mere transfer of knowledge (Giroux, 2011). The literature of productive pedagogy adds to that by highlighting that learners become strongly motivated when classroom practices recognise and value their ‘background experiences while connecting with their worlds beyond the classroom’ (Hayes et al., 2006:37). Despite the benefits of such approaches to children’s active learning and creativity, it has been argued that it is impossible for a teacher to plan activities that are always meaningful and exciting for every child (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015). However, the above example demonstrates that fun, exciting and meaningful learning for every child is achievable and that the more children are involved in shaping learning practices, the more engaging and creative these practices become.

During my fieldwork I had many opportunities to observe practices that involved a balanced combination of freedom and structure, and children seemed to be very confident and comfortable in working within such a framework. In addition to the excerpts given, the example below shows how the teacher organised a balanced freedom/structure approach during an activity called ‘Maths and the World’. This activity aimed to encourage children to apply mathematical knowledge. Juliet mentioned that children could either work individually or in groups of their preference and she presented the following guidelines on what constitutes a bad, an ok and a good poster.

Category	No followers	Worth a re-tweet	Millions of HITS
Content	no examples of maths in the world of work	one example of maths in the world of work	examples of maths in the world of work
	not about maths	two areas of maths needed	many areas of maths needed
	OR only shows one area of maths needed	shows some knowledge needed	shows knowledge and skills needed

Presentation	no colour	some colour	lots of colour
	nothing interactive	just a main title, no subheadings	title and subheadings
	no title / subheadings	mainly spelt correctly	all spelt correctly
	poor spelling unclear		

The teacher commented that the fourth row is what children should aim for and she also asked children to add anything more to this chart that they think is missing.

Gilleen raised her hand and added that a very good poster can also have interactive parts and pictures. No one else wanted to add something.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Tuesday 12 May 2015]

In the above example, Juliet presented a set of guidelines and encouraged children to try to create a poster that would meet the standards of the final category (Millions of HITS). These guidelines balanced freedom and structure and therefore had the potential to enable children's creativity (Craft, 2005, Chappell, 2007, Jindal-Snape et al., 2013). For example, the guidelines that referred to the content of the poster mentioned that a 'good' poster would include many areas of maths, demonstrating the knowledge and skills needed for a variety of roles and professions. This provided children with a structure that was not rigid and restrictive; instead, it provided some common ground on which children were encouraged to make choices and take decisions. In other words, this was an example in which the teacher provided a clear framework, while children were encouraged to be autonomous and given the freedom to think and take decisions.

However, the way the teacher structured this activity was embedded in a trendy discourse, through use of the framework of Twitter/social media. A 'good' poster was the one that would get millions of hits, whereas a 'bad' poster was linked to having no followers on Twitter. This raises a question about the assumptions that are reproduced through this activity. For example, does it mean that people who do not have many followers on social media are bad, sad and unsuccessful people? It has been argued that networking sites reinforce a process of 'standardising and quantifying social gratification' (De Rivera,

2015). This suggests that positive reinforcement of people on social media is not only abundant, but also very easy, since it only requires a simple click (De Rivera, 2015). However, this type of positive reinforcement can be problematic since it requires users to trade themselves in very specific ways within a consumerist discourse in order to get a plethora of 'likes'/hits etc. (De Rivera, 2015, Stokes, 2010). Furthermore, the reality of networking sites is also part of the production and representation of gender norms; that is, of 'how and in what way we can appear in public spaces' (Butler, 2009:ii). This means that people who do not follow the 'gender norms' may be stigmatised and those who do follow them 'will be the object of fascination and consumer pleasures' (Butler, 2009:ii). Therefore, 'trendy' techniques that 'sell' a version of reality that is highly gendered and consumerist need to be problematised before being suggested and used as 'successful' or innovative teaching techniques. The teacher, whilst seeking to create energy within the activity, appears to demonstrate a lack of awareness of the everyday politics and potentially divisive nature of this activity. This raises an issue of how well equipped teachers are to be self-critical of their own practice and to reflect instinctively on issues of social justice, discrimination and inclusion. In the above case, the teacher provides choice within a framework containing hidden (or not so hidden) messages that may or may not be picked up by the children.

This section answers research question 1 (What are children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom?) by concluding: children linked creativity with freedom and with opportunities to be flexible and to make choices; children's diverse perspectives were related to the degree of freedom and flexibility each child needed to enhance his/her experiences of creativity. Previous research has argued that freedom boosts creativity, but only on the basis that people possess the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding (NACCCE, 1999). This research suggested that children perceived freedom, understanding and creativity as interconnected elements that shape the creative process. Furthermore, a common theme within my dataset was the assertion made by children on the importance of having freedom and flexibility, but they also emphasised the need for some degree of guidance and structure. Therefore, too much freedom was identified by the majority of children as confusing, thus establishing links with other research that points to the need for a balanced approach between structure and freedom (Craft, 2005, Chappell, 2007, Davis et al., 2011). Additionally, the data of this study suggested that difficulties encountered by teachers when attempting to create meaningful activities for every child

can be overcome by actively involving children in learning processes, co-constructing activities, and taking children's interests into account during lesson planning. This section also enables my study to conclude that theories of childhood creativity should not only identify techniques (e.g. balancing freedom and structure) that successfully enable creativity, but should also pay attention to the environment in which such techniques are implemented. Research in the field of creativity often promotes neoliberal discourses, regimes of innovation and processes of marketisation (Munday, 2014); the analysis in this section has demonstrated some of the dangers of market-model approaches in relation to childhood and highlighted the need for creativity practices to be part of an anti-discriminatory school environment.

7.6.2 Relationships of trust and the benefits to creativity

The balance between structure and freedom explained in the previous section involved one essential characteristic when it occurred in practice: trusting relationships between teachers and children. As Alastair mentioned to me, 'Teachers trust us to do things. We are working in groups and teachers are trusting us to be on our own'. Juliet's thoughts on trusting children and the benefits to their creativity are presented below:

Juliet: I think it's about who can count children in. And realising that they can do, they can do a lot of the stuff themselves, they don't need the teacher to kind of pour all the knowledge into them. They should be the ones creating that themselves. I am confident now, after a year with this class, I can put up one of our weekly plans and say to them: you plan the week. And I think they would do a pretty good job. I think they know what their learning is supposed to be, they know what it looks like, they may know how they can progress and I think they can plan a week.
[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

What Juliet described above was also acknowledged and valued by the children themselves. For example, Alice once mentioned to me: 'The teacher would give us PAC tasks if there was a non-busy day and we'd go away and we do it so she doesn't have to constantly stand up on the board to explain everything.'

Juliet highlighted the importance of giving children an active role, of counting on them to organise their learning without her constantly pouring knowledge into them. Therefore, she highly valued children's ownership and control, in ways that chimed with literature on

creativity and self-led learning (Ang and Flewitt, 2015, Jeffrey and Craft, 2004). Juliet seemed very confident that children could handle knowledge and plan their activities for a whole week. Such opportunities for autonomy in learning are believed to promote creativity (Craft, 2005), in accordance with opportunities for risk-taking, experimentation and trusting relationships (Craft et al., 2014, Davies et al., 2013); all these possibilities were often provided to the children through activities such as planning their learning schedule for a week.

Juliet explained her thoughts on children's active participation in more detail, through some reflections on her practice, as illustrated below:

Juliet: And also I love just seeing how independent they are and I just think: I am so proud of you! Because at the start of the year the more were calling up to me: Oh ... 'What do I do?' and 'When do I do this?' You choose what you want to do! How can you learn this? And my class have done just as well as if I had dictated to them: you do this, you do this, you do this, but they are motivated. They like being in school, as much as they can do for eleven year olds! And they like learning and I think they have a bit more respect because they can do it their own way.
[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

Juliet paid considerable attention to the effort to create an environment that fostered children's autonomy. As Jones and Wyse (2004:5) mentioned, the most creative environments that they observed in their research were those where 'there was a different kind of relationship in the classroom, one that was not about an authoritative figure who held answers, resources and power, but one which was based on mutual respect, trust and, above all, enquiry'. Juliet's aim was to promote a learning atmosphere in which children had choices on how to learn, thus making children active participants in their own learning (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016). She placed emphasis on 'how' children learn, instead of merely on the content, that is, on 'what' they learn, and it is argued that this approach enhances children's satisfaction, performance and creativity (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015). According to Juliet, this type of learning environment is good not only because children's progress within it is successful, but also because their motivation is high, which supports literature suggesting that children's self-motivation is beneficial for their creativity (Jeffrey, 2008).

Trusting relationships between teacher and children and opportunities for children to be autonomous were manifested on various occasions during my fieldwork. One such example is given by Olivia below:

Krystallia: Do you want to talk to me about any creative moments that you had in primary school?

Olivia: Actually most recently I got to do my art lesson so that was very creative because we got to research an artist and we got to teach the lesson.

Krystallia: So what exactly did you do?

Olivia: We chose this artist, he was called I think Norval Morrisseau and then we made a power point and we taught the class. And the teacher sat in the lesson like one of the pupils ...

Krystallia: Oh so you were the teacher?

Olivia: Yes and that was really fun.

[...]

Krystallia: How do you think your friends found the lesson?

Olivia: I think they enjoyed it ... everyone really enjoys art so it's something that you find hard not to enjoy really.

Krystallia: Why did you feel creative during doing that?

Olivia: We got to design our power point, we got to design our lesson so ... yeah.

[Interview with Olivia, 10 June 2015]

In this excerpt, Olivia referred to an occasion when she and Rhiana were asked by the teacher to plan and deliver a lesson to their classmates. The focus of this lesson was a Canadian artist. The two girls met up a couple of times and discussed and created a PowerPoint presentation. Olivia and Rhiana established some criteria that children were prompted to follow, such as: creating an artwork following a technique similar to the artist's, making it bright, bold and colourful, and (if possible) including a combination of animals and plants (flowers, trees etc.).

Providing children with opportunities to become educators has been criticised for its inefficiency in reversing 'the typical power relations between adults and children' (Burman, 2013:229). Despite these criticisms many children mentioned that attending Olivia's and Rhiana's lesson ignited their creativity. Children highlighted the fact that Olivia and Rhiana gave some basic instructions but, apart from that, children were flexible as to how to create their artworks. Therefore, children perceived Olivia's and Rhiana's lesson as creative, due to the balance it provided between freedom and structure (Craft, 2005, Jindal-Snape et al., 2013), together with Olivia's and Rhiana's organisation of the

lesson, which gave opportunities for experimentation and exploration that fostered children's creativity (Craft, 2003b, Craft, 2011, Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015).

This section can answer research question 4 by stating that the aim of the CfE to be more enabling and to promote children's choice was implemented in practice through the creation of relationships that built trust between teachers and children. As previous research suggested, the more creative environments are those in which the relationships between people are based on respect and trust (Jones and Wyse, 2004). Learner's autonomy and opportunities for experimentation and risk-taking have also been identified as essential characteristics of creative environments (Craft, 2005, Craft et al., 2014, Davies et al., 2013) and Juliet seemed to be aware of that, as she tried to promote these aspects in practice. Enabling children to undertake the role of the educator was a one-off event and only two children had the opportunity to act as educators, but the impact of this initiative was well-received by the children, who felt that this action fostered their creativity. Overall, it can be concluded that opportunities that promoted children's choice did take place at 'Little Valley' Primary School, but these opportunities were not always continuous and consistent.

7.6.3 Building accepting and inclusive cultures

The creation of an accepting, supportive and positive culture between people in school spaces, to enable all children to be involved in creative processes, was one of the most dominant themes in my data. Children often and on various occasions explained to me how important such cultures were for the flourishing of their creativity. They talked about promoting creativity by devising opportunities for every child to co-exist and collaborate and to feel accepted in doing so. They also talked about how their feeling of being like a family made them happy and enhanced their creativity. Children expressed these feelings and thoughts to me in various ways. For example, Rowan defined creativity as a collection of everybody's handprints on the wall of the entrance of their school building, thus passing on a message that creativity is about inclusion, acceptance, diversity and relationships. The following quote elaborates on such arguments by showing how children enacted inclusive and accepting cultures.

Children were working on a project collaboratively, in groups of their own choice. The aim was to present their work on a poster. This team had written

the title: WORLD OF WORK with capital letters on the top of the page. This group of children had designed many interactive elements on their poster, such as a spinning circle. The idea behind that was that people would be asked to spin this circle and then they would get directions on their next steps, depending on which area of the circle would face an arrow. Calum was asked by his teammates to write the phrase 'spin to win' below the circle. Calum did this, but he wrote the letters upside down. He was very disappointed and angry with himself when he realized what he did. Harry had a look at it and he reassured Calum that this was not bad at all; instead of blaming Calum, Harry suggested that it would be a good idea to write this phrase twice, on both sides of the circle. Harry also said that this accidental 'mistake' would make the outcome even better, as it would visually represent the spinning nature of the circle. Calum was not persuaded by Harry's encouraging comments and he seemed to feel guilty about destroying part of the poster. Calum found some white stickers in an attempt to cover what he had previously written. However, the stickers did not completely cover everything and his writing was still observable. So, Calum remained disappointed and sad. The team was supportive to him and tried to persuade him for one more time that they did not feel angry about what he did.

[Excerpt from fieldnotes, Tuesday, 12 May 2015]

The above excerpt presents a case in which 'making mistakes' was not perceived as a bad thing by the team members. Instead, the atmosphere was caring and supportive. Children were not given strict guidelines about the creation of their poster and this fostered practices of experimentation and risk-taking. Children themselves added interactive parts to their poster, one of which was the spinning circle. Every child seemed to be respected and each one contributed ideas for the poster. Part of this culture of acceptance and mutual respect was illustrated when Calum made a mistake. The children's reaction was very open and inventive; instead of sticking to their initial idea, children took advantage of Calum's mistake in order to create something even more meaningful and interactive than their initial plan. Cultures that are open to accepting mistakes are said to support the flourishing of creativity (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015). Therefore, creativity seemed to be embedded in the interactions between children, which were rooted in an inclusive and supportive environment, an observation which is confirmed by other researchers (Jones and Wyse, 2004).

Additionally, Juliet showed that, in order to promote creativity, the teacher's role should be directed towards creating protective learning environments. A similar idea is presented below:

Juliet: I think also children's own fear of getting things wrong or looking stupid. So I think that that's so important to have the culture in your classroom of being OK to make mistakes. I remember one of my old classes, when someone asked a silly question we all got like ohhh ... we had a silly song and we had to sing the song! And the person would go: Oh no!! We also would ask the silly question of the day and they go like ... what is it? And you go: Do you have to put your book in the finish ... you know and everyone would laugh and the person would laugh. So I think it's important to make the children first of all feel comfortable and OK with the way they want to present their work, the way they want to be and to have an accepting culture in your classroom. Otherwise children will be a barrier to their own creativity, because they want to be just like everybody else.
[Interview with Juliet, 23 June 2015]

Children's own fear of making mistakes or looking stupid is viewed as one of the main barriers to children's creativity, according to Juliet. Thus, the cultivation of an accepting classroom culture is one of the fundamentals not only for making children feel comfortable, but also for fostering creative learning (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009). What is needed, based on Juliet's words and on suggestions in the relevant literature, is an environment where children 'feel safe and accepted' (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016:580) and in which there is mutual respect (Davies et al., 2013, Jindal-Snape et al., 2013), rapport and 'a safe environment to take risks and learn from their mistakes' (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015:495). As Jones and Wyse (2004) illustrated, the most creative environments embed creativity in the interactions between people, rather than utilising a 'creative slots' approach to learning. Finally, it is important to mention that within such an environment of acceptance it should be clear that everyone has good and different ideas and should be able to contribute on their own terms (Thomson and Hall, 2015). In order to build an environment that accepts mistakes, teachers could draw upon theories of 'productive pedagogies'. In particular, productive pedagogies connect to the social context of the child, recognise children's differences and aim to provide children with a supportive learning environment (Lingard et al., 2003). Productive pedagogies are based on the premise that good relationships are important but not enough; what is also needed is an environment within which children are not scared to fail (Hayes et al., 2006). Therefore, productive pedagogies literature could be used to support teachers in building accepting, trusting and creativity-supportive environments.

The following quote elaborates on such arguments by presenting an example of how the teacher of this P7 classroom attempted to build inclusive relationships.

The teacher (Juliet) was talking to the children about the celebrations that take place every year for the end of the school year. She made some vivid descriptions from the previous years and children seemed enthusiastic about the upcoming celebration and laughed a lot with Juliet's narration. Then, Juliet involved Ewan2 in the conversation, as an attempt to make him part of the team. She turned to him and said: 'Ewan2, you will be really good at cheering, won't you?' Ewan2 agreed and added that he does not like giving high fives, though. The teacher continued saying that she will miss seeing bottles of water always and everywhere in the classroom; on Ewan2's desk, on her desk, on the computer desk etc. (it is Ewan2's habit to leave his bottles of water at different places). Children agreed with the teacher saying that they will also miss Ewan2. Ewan2 seemed to be very happy; his eyes expressed satisfaction and his body language indicated that he was more energetic and engaged in the classroom discussion than before. [Excerpt from fieldnotes, Tuesday, 21 April 2015]

The above excerpt was an example of how Juliet tried to promote a culture of acceptance in this P7 classroom. Ewan2 was an autistic child who preferred to work alone. He was not active in group discussions, compared to other children who openly expressed their feelings and views. In contrast, Ewan2 chose to remain silent, observing other people or simply ignoring parts of the discussion to spend his time on things he found more interesting. Ewan2's decision to not actively participate in group discussions did not make him very popular among children; for example, other children showed off and self-promoted themselves by grabbing people's attention, but not many children approached Ewan2 or expressed interest in working with him.

In the above case, Juliet tried to engage Ewan2 in the group discussion by expressing a positive attitude towards Ewan2 in front of the whole classroom. Since Juliet was the classroom teacher, her comments conveyed some of this authority. Furthermore, Juliet did not choose to present elements that Ewan2 was good at; instead, she chose to elaborate on some of Ewan2's habits that other children might have found annoying, e.g. his habit of leaving his water bottles in different places. Juliet did not accuse Ewan2 regarding such habits; instead, she explained how these different parts of his identity contributed to who he was as a person and that this was accepted and valued by the teacher. It would be Ewan2's unusual habits that would make him missed and these moments would remind Juliet of Ewan2. Overall, through Juliet's actions, Ewan2's disability was not perceived as a 'problem' (Davis et al., 2003:192). Instead, his habits were emphasised, making the heterogeneity of his life respected and valued (Davis et al., 2003). Therefore, by actions

such as the above, Juliet aimed to create an environment in which children could be accepted and valued for every part of their identity, within a culture in which children could be comfortable and respected.

However, there might be different readings and interpretations of Juliet's actions in this case. For example, 'chiding' Ewan2 and making fun of him (even if that was expressed in an appreciative way) might not be seen as inclusive (in contrast to my more positive analysis in the above paragraph). Juliet overemphasised Ewan2's unusual habits and highlighted how he was different from the rest of the children. Although her aim was to make Ewan2 feel accepted, she also displayed disability as the main feature of his master identity. It has been argued that disabled children are often confronted with discourses that have their 'identity imposed on them, in a way that not only tells them what they are, but also what they might be' (Davis and Watson, 2001:673). Such discourses are usually derived from the medical model of disability, which led to the creation of stereotypes of 'normality' and 'abnormality' and described children's identities in terms of labels (James, 1993). Therefore, a different reading of the above excerpt would argue that Ewan2 was expected to comply with the status imposed on him (of being different and having unusual habits); 'to naturalise that difference and for that difference to become part of his lifeworld' (Davis and Watson, 2001:673). It is also worth noting that if inclusion really worked in this classroom, Juliet would not have to mention all these issues surrounding Ewan2 and create this speech to make him feel included. It is important to acknowledge that there are competing interpretations of this data extract and that, rather than seeking to derive a specific generalisation or single interpretation from it, we can acknowledge that Ewan2's experiences, like those of other disabled children, will have been fluid and diverse (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002) and that Juliet did not always reify his identity – because there are different kinds of teachers with a great variety of approaches (Davis and Watson, 2001).

Summing up, the excerpts presented in this section reflect the importance of having spaces where children feel safe and accepted (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016); which promote mutual respect (Davies et al., 2013, Jindal-Snape et al., 2013); which create a safe environment in which children can take risks; and which enable children to learn from their mistakes (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015). It was highlighted that such spaces are particularly important for promoting children's creativity. This section argued that in this P7 classroom, such accepting cultures were fostered by the teacher's attempts to involve all children in

discussions and to encourage children to accept other people's differences (even though some of those attempts might be interpreted by writers within disability studies as naïve and lacking in knowledge of research on disabled children). Furthermore, this section presented an example of how a culture of acceptance of mistakes was enacted in practice. This section answered research question 4 (How is the aim of the CfE to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice implemented in practice?), by arguing that the teachers sought to implement the CfE's aim to be more enabling by creating a culture of mutual acceptance and rapport, which enabled children to take risks, to be tolerant of 'mistakes', to be supportive of each other's perspectives, and to encourage each other.

7.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the way creativity was implemented in practice through attempts to create enabling cultures at 'Little Valley' Primary School. More specifically, I have drawn attention to children's perspectives on creativity, as well as to how the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice was implemented in practice.

Section 7.2 summarised some of the key arguments of this chapter. In particular, my findings can be linked to previous research which suggested that childhood is intensively governed and institutionalised (Rose, 1999, Prout, 2003, Smith, 2014) and also to research suggesting that when children get trapped in hierarchical and discriminatory relationships with teachers, these relationships have negative consequences for their creativity (Davis et al., 2011, Davis and Smith, 2012). However, on a positive note, this section suggests that children are often aware of such forms of domination and are able to question and challenge the established reality in schools. For example, notions like age, freedom, space and relationships and the forms they take in schools were problematised by children, who could imagine and describe their visions of a more creative school.

In section 7.3 I highlighted the importance of viewing space as a dynamic process to promote the flourishing of children's creativity. Drawing on previous research that has viewed space as a dynamic process involving human experiences, social relationships

(Christensen et al., 2015, Wyness, 2003, Änggård, 2010), and hierarchies (Davis et al., 2011) which have been described by the term ‘power geometry’ (Massey, 1992:80), I have indicated that children’s experiences of creativity are interwoven with social relationships and space. In addition, I have illustrated how creativity is shaped by and dependent upon children’s embodied interactions, when children’s bodies are embedded in and part of dynamic spaces.

Furthermore, I have drawn attention to the importance of children’s differences for their creativity, by paying particular attention to interactions between children belonging to different age groups. More specifically, I have demonstrated that opportunities for children to work with others from different age groups enhanced their experiences of creativity, through dialogue and co-creation. However, as such opportunities were not very common, I have highlighted the importance of promoting them in schools and implementing them in practice more vigorously and more often.

Section 7.4 has drawn attention to play and adventurous experiences in outdoor spaces through the process of redesigning the school playground and the use of loose parts. More specifically, this section demonstrated that the use of loose parts had the potential to enhance children’s collaboration and to enable children from different age groups to play together. Additionally, the involvement of children in the decision-making process on the refurbishment of the playground created enabling cultures that promoted children’s choice. I also showed that loose parts created opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and risk-taking and enabled children to shape their play preferences so as to deconstruct barriers raised by tight surveillance and adult control (Prout, 2003).

My data indicated that creativity is fostered through opportunities for unstructured play and experimentation. This section suggested that such opportunities should be created not only in school playgrounds, but in other school spaces as well.

Section 7.5 discussed the flexible use of space and showed how such opportunities influence children’s creativity. In particular, my findings could be linked to previous research suggesting that rigid supervisory practices in schools can be questioned, challenged and transformed (Gallagher, 2004), and also that this can be achieved through promoting children’s choice and control over decisions on the use of space. I have also

shown that controlling space and being able to work in spaces of their preference is closely linked to the cultivation of children's creativity. However, as this section indicated, frequent opportunities for children to obtain control over space should be viewed as part of the overall picture of classroom practices, which were not consistent, but involved contradictory aspects (e.g. flexible use of space, but also ability grouping, fines/awards).

In section 7.6 I discussed the relationship between freedom and creativity and concluded that creativity flourishes in environments that provide a balance between freedom and structure (see also Craft, 2005, Chappell, 2007, Davis et al., 2011). The data of this research also demonstrate the significant role of children's active involvement in the learning process and of engagement with their interests for the enhancement of creativity, which is in line with practices promoted by theories of progressive and productive pedagogies (Giroux, 2011, Hayes et al., 2006).

Linking the data of this chapter to the data of chapter 6, I concluded that although opportunities for freedom and trust existed, they were not continuous, consistent or established by right; also, they were not deeply embedded in the culture of all teachers and stakeholders. A further finding was that the teacher lacked an embedded and critically reflective perspective on the values and hidden messages within her activities. This led to the conclusion that innovative teaching techniques should be used only after ensuring that, and reflecting on the extent to which, they actually enable an anti-discriminatory classroom environment.

Creativity theories and practices often get trapped in the rhetoric of innovation and economic competitiveness (Munday, 2014), but my research highlights the importance of connecting creative pedagogy to discussions about the future of education and society, and to problematising current practices under the guidance of the question: 'What is education for?'

Additionally, I have shown links to previous research which suggests that creative environments are characterised by relationships of trust and respect between adults and children (Craft, 2005, Craft et al., 2014, Davies et al., 2013, Jones and Wyse, 2004). In particular, I have shown that spaces in which children feel safe, accepted, respected and able to take risks and experiment are very important in building enabling cultures to

creativity. I have also suggested that productive pedagogies (Lingard et al., 2003, Hayes et al., 2006) may be helpful in guiding classroom practices and framing the creation of supportive learning environments where children feel included and are not scared to make mistakes. Finally, I argued that the teacher's attempts to build trust and to create an inclusive environment were sometimes questionable, as her actions might have been viewed as disabilist. But I also highlighted, in line with other researchers (Davis and Watson, 2001), that the teacher did not always reify the identities of disabled children, inasmuch as she employed a variety of approaches in classroom practices.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This chapter aims to provide a summary of the findings of the present research by revisiting and answering the research questions. In addition, the chapter discusses the implications of this study for the literature, and more specifically for debates about collaborative creativity, cultural and structural barriers to creativity, and educational practices that enable the cultivation of childhood creativity. The chapter continues by discussing implications for policy and practice and for future research, and ends with some concluding reflections.

8.1 Summarising findings, answering the research questions and discussing implications for the literature

Based on gaps identified in the literature, this study aimed to explore children's and teacher's perspectives on creativity within one primary school classroom in Scotland, exploring how creativity is perceived and can be fostered in this classroom. The exploration of this aim was shaped and guided by the following specific research questions:

- **Research Question 1)** What are children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom?
- **Research Question 2)** How is children's creativity experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom?
- **Research Question 3)** What are the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity?
- **Research Question 4)** How is the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice, implemented in practice?
- **Research Question 5a)** What cultural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?
- **Research Question 5b)** What structural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?

The above research questions were investigated using an ethnographic methodology with 25 children (aged 11-12 years old) and two teachers in a P7 class in a Scottish primary school. Generating data through an ethnographic approach created space for me to

participate in children's daily lives over a period of four and a half months and to address my research questions by exploring children's diverse perspectives on creativity. This section continues by summarising the findings and answering the research questions.

Research Question 1

What are children's diverse perspectives on creativity in a P7 classroom?

Answer to Research Question 1

The analysis in chapter 7 of this study has shown that creativity was perceived as an embodied practice, deeply embedded in children's bodily interactions. Such interactions took place in school spaces, and the conceptualisation of space as a process and not as a static entity (Christensen et al., 2015) was crucial to how children experienced and embodied creativity. More specifically, in line with other research, space was not viewed as static, because 'the social relations which create it are themselves dynamic by their very nature' (Massey, 1992:80). Chapter 7 also argued that the dynamic aspect of the social relationships was related to power relationships and hierarchy (Davis et al., 2011), or in other words, to 'power geometry' (Massey, 1992:81). Overall, this study has shown that children's feelings, interactions and space were interconnected with and influenced children's experiences of creativity. This study extends the discussion in the field of creativity by demonstrating that creativity was not merely perceived by the children as an individual trait; instead, as this study has shown, children's feelings, interactions and space were interconnected and influenced their experiences of creativity.

The significance of diversity in fostering creativity has been identified in previous research in the field of creativity (see Davis, 2013). My study complements this research by concluding that children's perspectives on creativity also included views which emphasised that childhood is not a homogeneous group, and linked children's diversity to creativity. Children particularly stressed the importance of working with children from different age groups and of creating shared learning experiences through dialogue and co-construction. However, my thesis extends the work of Davis (2013) by showing that children's views on the importance of acknowledging the diversity and heterogeneity of childhood have had little impact on the design of learning practices in schools. For example, as shown in chapter 6 of this thesis, the division of children into ability groups did not help children with diverse academic abilities to interact. Additionally, this finding

supports childhood studies literature which argues that developmental theories of age and stage raise barriers to inclusion by washing out diversity (Burman, 2008).

Chapter 7 of this thesis demonstrated that children linked creativity to the forthcoming introduction of loose parts to their playground. Children argued that playing with loose parts was fun and interesting and that this process would boost their creativity through producing opportunities for them to play, to experiment, to explore, to shape their play preferences and to take risks within flexible structures. Such opportunities are examples of encouraging children to be autonomous in choosing play activities (Clements, 2004) and to shape their own play preferences (Hyndman et al., 2016), within an environment of reduced adult supervision (Prout, 2003). This finding enables chapter 7 to conclude that children perceived creativity as a process that takes place in flexible and unstructured spaces. Chapter 7 also demonstrated that children associated creativity with flexible use of space, both indoors and outdoors. It has been argued that school spaces are often very rigidly structured and gain control over children by controlling time and space (Devine, 2002). However, as Gallagher (2004:34) has suggested, 'such surveillance practices can also be challenged, resisted or transformed within the same space' and my research is able to confirm this finding, while adding that opportunities for children to control space affected their experiences of creativity. Research has suggested that a number of types of environment enable creativity (Davis et al., 2012) and my thesis showcased a variety of spaces that enabled childhood creativity. For example, children highlighted that working in spaces of their own preference (e.g. quiet or outdoor spaces) promoted their creativity.

In chapter 7 I demonstrated that children's perspectives on creativity were various and diverse. First of all, children connected creativity to children's feelings (that were produced as an outcome of their interactions), mentioning the important role of positive emotions for the cultivation of creativity. This study has shown that feeling accepted and included was very important for enabling children to embody creativity, instead of merely aiming to finish off their tasks with the least possible effort. Chapter 7 concluded that creativity flourishes through encouraging children to be flexible and to make choices within environments that provide a balanced approach between freedom and structure. This finding confirms previous research (Craft, 2005, Davis et al., 2011, Davis, 2013) and adds that difficulties with the practical implementation of such approaches can be overcome by actively involving children in the learning process, by taking their views into

account, and by using their interests as resources for shaping teaching and learning practices.

This study demonstrated that children's perspectives were often influenced by teachers' views, so paying attention to teachers' perspectives on creativity was also important in order to understand when and if children's perspectives on creativity were influenced by those views. As concluded in chapter 5, the teacher's perspective was that creativity is linked to collaboration through the development of flexible approaches to teaching and learning that promote experimentation and encourage children's active engagement. This is in line with scholarly arguments that creativity is fostered when teachers promote children's curiosity and active engagement (Craft et al., 2014). However, policy documents and reports do not always reflect academic arguments concerning research on creativity, particularly in relation to the limitations of individualistic and product-oriented understandings of creativity. Because of these understandings, the teacher was caught between the aim of producing outputs and her own aim of fostering collaborative creativity. Therefore, this thesis concludes that teachers' perspectives on collaboration and creativity are developed within a context of contradictory information and advice that inhibits collaborative creativity.

Research Question 2

How is children's creativity experienced and performed during processes of collaboration in a P7 classroom?

Answer to Research Question 2

Chapter 5 concluded that most children highly valued collaborative work and that every child had the ability to be involved in co-constructive and collective approaches to creativity. This study has shown that collaboration gave children the opportunity to help each other, combine their ideas and, through this process, enhance their creativity. Children's experiences of collaboration and creativity shared some similarities with the work of scholars from the progressive education movement, who argue that meaningful learning is facilitated through the combined action of children and teachers (Dewey, 2011) and through viewing learning as a process for co-constructing the future (Freire, 1994). On the other hand, children also perceived creativity as the outcome (rather than the process) of collaboration. Such views were in line with scholarly arguments that 'creativity

is obviously to do with producing something original' (NACCCE, 1999:28) and that 'productivity' and 'the ability to produce an outcome of value and worth' are key components of creativity (Sharp, 2004:5).

Chapter 5 further concluded that creativity was experienced by children through collaboration and co-construction, which controlled their learning in an atmosphere of internal motivation, peer support, encouragement and balance between the personal and the collective voice. The analysis in this chapter supported research indicating that children's experiences of creativity were positively influenced by working environments which built trust with the teacher, valued children's autonomy, enabled children to collectively control their decisions, avoided excessive teacher support, and abstained from intrusive adult supervision (Davis and Smith, 2012, Galton, 1992).

Furthermore, chapter 5 concluded that making use of and interacting with previous knowledge allowed children to be active constructors of their own learning. This finding builds on the idea that children are not empty vessels that receive and store information, and the perspective within which children can be encouraged to be active participants in learning processes (Craft, 2005). Davis and Smith (2012:151) argued that creativity is related to 'freedom to express feelings, emotions, love and inspiration' and that collaborative work assists creativity to flourish through co-constructive practices in which different views are listened to and respected. Additionally, chapter 5 concluded that for some children creativity, through collaboration and co-construction, was something much larger than the quality of the final output, something much more meaningful to the children through its involvement with the complex process of relationship building. Children enjoyed building relationships with other children, but they also enjoyed building a relationship with the creative process, e.g. having the space to become immersed in and reflect upon the creative process itself. Hence, when adult observers judge the quality of the final output, they should be aware that their adult criteria may not have meaning for the children and may restrict the richness of the children's experience and the value of the whole creative process.

As mentioned, children are a heterogeneous group (Tisdall, 2012) and the analysis in this study has also shown that embracing diversity and children's varied views and ideas is very important for fostering collaboration and creativity. However, my findings in chapter

5 extend our understanding of childhood diversity by arguing that children utilise diversity as an opportunity to criticise their own ideas, to learn from others, and to co-create more vibrant and robust outcomes by focusing on dialogue and mutual respect during the creative process.

Finally, this study explored collaboration between children belonging to different ability groups (a rare phenomenon to observe, since in the class I observed children usually worked with others of the same ability level). My analysis, in chapter 5, demonstrated that the way power operated was not always by creating cultures of exclusion, but also by operating as a productive force within relationships (see for example, Gallagher, 2008b). Chapter 5's analysis of an excerpt describing the collaboration between a girl who belonged to the 'highest' ability level and a boy who belonged to the 'lowest' level enables this study to conclude that, although power is immersed in children's relationships as a fundamental aspect of them, children's dominant position and imperative comments do not necessarily always, oppress other children. Drawing on Foucault (1994), Gallagher (2008b:147) explains that 'power is productive...power is dangerous, but it is also full of possibilities, the instrument both of oppression and of liberation'. This study reaffirmed that power may act as a motivating force and highlighted that power can act as an enabler to children's creativity, by giving children the space to contribute by their own means.

Research Question 3

What are the cultural issues that emerge during processes of childhood creativity?

Answer to Research Question 3

My study advances current thinking on creativity and schooling by illustrating the range of cultural barriers that may emerge when trying to enable creativity in practice, and by arguing that barriers to creativity are linked to perceiving collaboration as an accumulation of individual tasks. For example, chapter 5 demonstrated that children often divided responsibilities into individual tasks in order to finish a task more quickly, or to use each one's strengths to make a task look better. This chapter concluded that the practice of dividing responsibilities into individual tasks often led children to perceive collaborative work as a synthesis of individual tasks that did not involve any elements of collaboration and co-construction within their peer group.

Scholars have highlighted that dangers to creativity emerge when it is placed within a system that pays extensive attention to the quality of the output-product (Wyse, 2013) and makes school a 'results factory' (Munday, 2014:325). The analysis in chapter 5 highlights – in line with other researchers (Davis and Watson, 2001) – that the structural norms of schools influence the dominant cultures in schools and that thus, children's experiences of creativity involve a synthesis of issues of agency, culture and structure. Indeed, when structures, in terms of the quality of the outcomes, put pressure on individuals then it is likely that cultural barriers to creativity will emerge.

Chapter 5 concluded that cultural barriers to creativity and restraints on children's creative flow also emerged when teachers adopted top-down approaches and children felt obliged to follow the adults' commands (see also Davis, 2013). Scholars in the field of creativity have emphasised the importance of being tolerant towards children's mistakes (Dababneh et al., 2010) and of not interrupting the idea-production process within a group (Craft, 2005). My study builds on these ideas to conclude that cultural barriers to creativity are raised when adults implement rigid and unreflective approaches which aim to correct and regulate children's work, instead of valuing the diverse views and ideas that emerge and travel through processes of co-creation.

Furthermore, this study showed how different ways of being a boy and of 'doing' gender influence boys' power relations and creativity through the construction of exclusive cultures. For example, chapter 5 concluded, in a similar way to research on childhood, gender and ethnicity, that cultures of exclusion which created barriers to children's creativity were produced between boys who expressed their masculinity in 'softer' ways and boys who were rough (Konstantoni, 2011), stressing 'position and hierarchy' (Thorne, 1993:2) and performing 'hegemonic masculinities' (Connell, 2005).

Academic ability was another decisive factor in the way power operated in groups of children, creating cultures of exclusion and barriers to children's creativity. Power seemed to accrue to the very academic children who took most decisions and whose views dominated. This study showed that children's participation was often not a co-constructive process, as some children were able to play a much more active and decisive role than others, and the way power operated within groups of children restrained children's control over their preferred level of participation. This was particularly important for children with

a disability; although disabled children's experiences were diverse, academic ability did play a very important role in how they formed power relations and cultures of exclusion. Chapter 5 raised this issue by presenting the example of Ewan1, whose disability and 'poor' academic performance created power relations that enforced cultures leading to his exclusion from groups of children in the classroom. Therefore, with Ewan1's academically related 'markers of success' having been proved inaccessible (Benjamin, 2003:103), he described football as the most creative thing in primary school, for he felt included and successful when playing football as part of a group.

In addition to the above factors, cultures of exclusion that raised barriers to creativity were produced through the performance of children's intersecting identities. As Kustatscher (2017:74) observed, 'everyday interactions in children's lives are far from trivial, but steeped in relations of power'. This study contributes to this argument by showing how interactions between children led to exclusionary practices which affected their experiences of creativity. The analysis in this study has shown the important role of gender, 'race' and emotions in the way children's bonds and friendships were formed and performed, leading to cultures of hierarchy and exclusion. This conclusion was based on the analysis of two excerpts. The first one presented gendered and race-related interactions among boys, in which some boys were louder and rougher than others, their gender performances thus differing (representing both 'hegemonic' and 'non-hegemonic' masculinities Connell, 2005), while children with south Asian backgrounds were excluded. Here, children's relationships involve many more complexities than can be related to other aspects of people's identities (Connell, 1987); and in line with other researchers, chapter 5 found that children used their gendered and racialised identities and bodies to gain power and control, and to exclude (Evans and Holt, 2011, Skattebol, 2006).

The second example was of a group of girls. This excerpt reaffirmed Blazek's (2011) argument that friendship is not only something positive, but also has exclusionary effects among children's peer groups that are linked to children's intersectional identities. As this example showed, children used their racialised bodies, but also their emotions, to form bonds and to exclude. Therefore, this study has shown that cultural barriers to creativity may emerge when children's relationships foster exclusionary practices that do not leave space for all children to experience creativity to the extent that they want to.

Research Question 4

How is the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice, implemented in practice?

Answer to Research Question 4

Children expressed the view that the use of loose parts in the school playground achieved the following: it enhanced children collaboration; enabled children who did not have friends to become part of a group; broke the structures of age categorisation; and created opportunities for children of all ages to play together. The findings of chapter 6 supported arguments in the literature that it is very unlikely that ability grouping raises standards (Ireson and Hallam, 1999, Wrigley and Wormwell, 2016) and that, therefore, the idea that groups of children have to be structured on the basis of their academic ability in order to be creative is misleading. Chapter 7 highlighted the ability of children to use their common interests, rather than adult-perceived academic ability, as a basis on which to form groups. Chapters 6 and 7 also observed that pedagogy, curriculum and materials constitute different but interlinked frameworks which influence children's experiences of creativity in schools. Finally, chapter 7 concluded that the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to promote children's choice could be achieved through the process of co-creation of space. For example, children's agency was recognised when they participated in the early stages of planning and were involved in the decision-making process concerning the renovation of the school's playground.

My research has also shown, in chapter 7, that the aim of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive, to be more enabling and to promote children's choice was implemented in practice through the creation of a culture of mutual acceptance and rapport, which enabled children to take risks, to be tolerant of mistakes, and to support and encourage each other. This chapter advances the work of researchers who have argued that a positive atmosphere for fostering and enabling creativity can be created by an environment in which children feel 'safe and accepted' (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016:580), there is mutual respect (Davies et al., 2013, Jindal-Snape et al., 2013), there is rapport, and there is 'a safe environment to take risks and learn from their mistakes' (Elton-Chalcraft and Mills, 2015:495). It did so by explaining what inclusive cultures looked like in practice (even though some of these attempts might be interpreted by writers within disability studies as naïve and lacking in knowledge of research on disabled children) and by

highlighting, within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence, the importance of building caring, accepting and supportive relationships.

Furthermore, chapter 7 concluded that relationships of trust benefited creativity. In particular, important elements of teachers' approaches that fostered children's creativity included: encouragement of children's autonomy, enabling of risk-taking, and promotion of children's ownership of learning. This finding can be connected with arguments in the literature concerning children's freedom and autonomy (see Ang and Flewitt, 2015, Craft, 2005) and the suggestion that the more creative environments are those in which people's relationships are based on trust and respect (Jones and Wyse, 2004). However, my study also contextualises this literature to conclude that, although opportunities that promoted children's choice and autonomy did take place at 'Little Valley' Primary School, these attempts were not continuous and consistent. Hence, by connecting chapters 6 and 7, my thesis is able to conclude that, although the Curriculum for Excellence includes a vision of more autonomous and flexible practices, the current lack of clarity and direction means that this aim is not always realised. Attempts to introduce more flexible practices are inhibited by a lack of spaces in which child and adult autonomy can be fostered.

Research Question 5

a) What cultural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?

b) What structural issues influence childhood creativity within the context of the Curriculum for Excellence?

Answer to Research Question 5a)

Chapter 6 examined the cultural barriers to creativity that may emerge when trying to implement the aspiration of the Curriculum for Excellence to be less prescriptive. The findings of chapter 6 illustrated the cultural barriers to creativity that arise when structures operate to create cultures of exclusion, including the exclusion by adults of children's particular perspectives, ways of being and agency. For example, despite placing agency at the forefront of recent developments that are part of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence (Priestley and Biesta, 2013, Priestley et al., 2015), it appeared that children's agency was neglected and that the conceptualisation of teachers' agency was embedded in the rhetoric of individual agency, e.g. when the teacher made decisions, without asking

children, concerning the ‘creative’ teaching and learning practices to be utilised in the classroom.

Chapter 6 problematises the notion of individual agency and, in line with views of other researchers (Burkitt, 2016, Moosa-Mitha, 2005, Konstantoni, 2012), it highlights the importance of viewing agency as a notion that involves interdependent relationships. This is important, because when children’s agency is not taken seriously and is not viewed as interlinked with teachers’ agency, questions arise regarding the impact of such practices on how children experience creativity. The findings of this study revealed the frequent held belief of teachers that children’s creativity is fostered when teachers are active agents who contribute to the development of the curriculum (Rogers and Wyse, 2015), and who exercise practices of creative teaching, such as enhancing children’s inspiration and enjoyment (Scottish Executive, 2006). However, paying considerable attention to teachers’ individual agency does not leave space for both parties (teachers and children) to be involved in collaborative and dialogic processes of co-creating learning practices (Davis and Smith, 2012). In addition to the above, the findings of chapter 6 illustrated that teachers’ agency was indeed highlighted in policy documents, such as the Curriculum for Excellence, but that in practice, barriers were raised due to top-down management and hierarchical relationships between staff. Here, by connecting the idea that structures inhibited teachers’ agency to the answer to question 5b – that ability groups, hierarchical cultures and curriculum structures inhibit childhood creativity – my thesis is able to conclude that introducing teachers’ and children’s agency into a rigid system (for example, one that ignores particular viewpoints) without addressing the politics of exclusion, inclusion and participation (Davis and Smith, 2012, Moosa-Mitha, 2005), fails to create a supportive environment for co-creation, dialogue and creativity.

My thesis has highlighted the importance of paying attention to cultures of decision-making that exclude children. First of all, this research has shown that creative teaching does not always foster children’s creativity, because the so-called creative teaching practices – which involve non-ordinary approaches to teaching that aim to make learning more fun and engaging (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004) – are in reality highly structured and prescriptive. For example, chapter 6 referred to the tendency for the teacher to ask children to follow specific guidelines in a way that left very little, if any, space for children’s input. Chapter 6 problematised the substantial emphasis placed by the teachers on creative

teaching practices and highlighted the importance of building relationships in which children feel comfortable with taking decisions about their learning. Chapter 6 also identified contradictions between teachers' aims and practices that created cultural barriers to creativity. In particular, the findings of this study identified a contradiction between the teacher's aim of enhancing children's creativity through their participation in the annual Primary 7 show, and the teacher's practice, which privileged aural surveillance and limited children's active involvement to repeating the same speeches, movements and music over a period of almost two months. In line with other researchers who argue that hierarchy creates barriers to creativity (Davis et al., 2011), this finding demonstrated that cultural barriers to creativity emerge when teachers' approaches are authoritarian and involve hierarchical relationships between adults and children.

Chapter 6 also demonstrated that rigidly structured learning practices make it difficult for children to actively participate in their learning and thus, create cultural barriers to creativity. For example, it argued that such cultural barriers emerged when teachers became 'benign dictators', whilst believing that they were creating flexible practices. In particular, this analysis demonstrated that teachers' monitoring and controlling approaches were often rooted in their worries that children might not be able to achieve specific set standards and 'finish off' their work.

In addition to the above, chapter 6 concluded that cultural barriers to creativity were raised when parental expectations conflicted with the cultivation of flexible learning settings. Teachers often mentioned that parental pressures to enhance effectiveness and produce measurable outcomes did not go along with teachers' intentions and imposed an extra burden of responsibility on them. This resonates with Ball's (2003:220) argument that teachers experience 'a sense of being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies'.

Furthermore, in chapter 6 the teacher argues that parental pressures had another particular characteristic, that of minimising the importance of building dialogic learning practices and promoting collective choice through methods that encourage children's active involvement. My study did not involve research with parents. However, the teachers' views encourage us to extend our discussions of the cultural barriers to creativity so as to consider wider cultural influences beyond the school. Educationalists argue that cultures

do include teachers' actions and activities (Priestley et al., 2015), but also include parental influences. Therefore, cultural barriers to creativity may emerge from cultures both inside and outside the school (teachers, parents). The teacher in my study argued that pressure points appear when such cultures focus on outcomes (e.g. maths and literacy), are opposed to children's and teachers' agency, and do not support the creation of flexible practices.

Finally, chapter 6 argued that cultural barriers to creativity may emerge through expectations for children to perform well and to focus on their individual progress. In particular, I argued that barriers to creativity emerge when we pay too much attention to individualism, whilst neglecting practices that value diversity, equity and collaboration. Chapter 6 explained the nuanced nature of such barriers and argued that when we look closely at how practices of individual performativity operate, we can then notice occasions when excessive focus on personal progress and improvement do not leave much space for co-construction, flexibility and creativity. Such cultures reinforce practices that 'empty out' social relationships (Fielding, 2008:64) and establish the ground for the 'survival of the fittest' (Ball, 1998). Therefore, this study critiques the market-model approaches to education and seeks to raise awareness of the significant barriers to creativity that are produced by such approaches.

Answer to Research Question 5b)

Chapter 6 concluded that structural barriers to creativity were linked to the Curriculum for Excellence. Scholars have argued that the design of curricula is not value-free (Craft, 2005), but embeds views and visions for the future of education and society (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016). The Curriculum for Excellence was introduced in 2006 in Scottish schools as a progressive alternative to the status quo. So one might imagine that, as it was based in part on teachers' views, it would enable teachers to reach consensus on its application. Yet, chapter 6 demonstrated that the Curriculum for Excellence has multiple and conflicting identities and that some people interpret it as a flexible curriculum and others as a curriculum that embeds neoliberal ideas. This study contributes to our understanding of the difficulties encountered when trying to promote creativity through policy documents. Chapter 6 demonstrated that the CfE's multiple identities and lack of clear coherence as to what is expected of teachers led to a blurred and indistinct landscape. This lack of clarity means that schools are without a distinct plan, strategy and framework for enabling creativity. It means, further, that school cultures which have enabled different and flexible

approaches to implementation could also create structural barriers to creativity (e.g. lack of a clear plan, framework and approach). The latter point links to the findings of the CREANOVA project, namely, that creativity does not happen in a vacuum and needs a balance between total freedom and rigidity (Davis et al., 2011).

In addition to the above, chapter 6 argued that two parts of the blurred landscape of the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence were teachers' agendas on personalisation, and their view of the curriculum as consisting of chunks. Personalisation often reflected managerialist arguments focused on ticking boxes, improving specific skills (Wrigley, 2006), and top-down command and control (Davis and Smith, 2012). As Lawler and Bilson (2010) highlighted, problems arise when humanistic thinking is introduced into hierarchical organisations without addressing the issue of power. Chapter 6 concluded that structural barriers to children's creativity arose when cultivation of skills within a tick-box system was perceived as more important than exploration and risk-taking.

Chapter 6 concludes that by organising the curriculum in chunks, teachers created a rigid structure that did not promote interconnections between different academic subjects; did not enable space for less rigid practices to arise; and failed to create the conditions for the cultivation of children's creativity. For example, chapter 6 found that clear boundaries between different subjects, reflected in a curriculum in chunks and within tight timeframes, limited the time children spent on each task and constrained their attempts to perform creativity by making connections between distinct domains of knowledge.

Structural barriers to creativity were also raised by expectations placed on teachers to evidence the outcomes of their work. Chapter 6 demonstrated that teachers felt pressured to work to a rigid, overly evidence-focused 'what works' agenda. These findings are in line with scholarly discussions which mention that teachers are under considerable pressure to meet externally imposed standards (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016, Hayward, 2015) within an educational system that has become excessively technicist (Fielding, 2008) and pays substantial attention to academic outputs (Ball and Olmedo, 2013). In addition, this study observed that structural barriers to creativity were raised through a knock-on effect of teachers asking children to spend time on meaningless, time-consuming tasks. This finding extends our knowledge by questioning the very essence of the notion of standards and regimes of performativity that seek to govern teachers' practices. This enables my

study to raise the question: what is the purpose of these standards if they result in meaningless learning?

Chapter 6 also discussed assessment practices and concluded that such practices created additional structural barriers to creativity. More specifically, both ‘formative’ and ‘summative’ assessment practices were used in the ‘Little Valley’ Primary School P7 classroom. ‘Formative assessment’ is a term used to describe a type of assessment that, apparently, helps learning (Harlen, 2016) by focusing on the process of learning rather than on the outcome (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016). However, chapter 6 demonstrates that in the P7 classroom of my study both ‘formative’ and ‘summative’ assessment practices were implemented by rigidly categorising the different academic subjects (e.g. Literacy, Numeracy) and reinforcing hierarchies between fragmented chunks of knowledge. This approach discouraged children from making connections between different subjects and produced a rigid structure which raised barriers to creativity.

Chapter 6 also concluded that children’s categorisation (e.g. in ability groups) created barriers to creativity. The findings showed that the use of ability groups made it difficult for children of different levels to work together, because they were prompted to focus on producing good-quality outcomes and maintaining a strong academic performance. Within this discourse, children were not encouraged to build on their differences and use them as a driving force; rather, such differences segregated children in categories of able and less able. Cultures that embraced the importance of the quality of the outputs and of good performance also raised structural barriers to creativity, as children either were inspected by the teachers or monitored themselves in order to reach these goals; as a result, the time that they could spend in helping each other, and in being involved in the learning process through working with children other than those of the same ability group, was limited.

Finally, structural barriers to creativity were raised through the introduction and implementation of multiple systems of individual and group awards (e.g. fake credit cards, pom-poms and fines) that were used for behaviour management, as well as for managing children’s productivity. Most children were used to having this system as part of their daily classroom routine, and they also viewed its implementation positively. They mentioned that it was important to be rewarded for working hard and that this gave them extra motivation to be more productive. Children also acknowledged the significance of such a

system for their individual progress and accepted punishment (in the form of losing money from their credit cards) as something normal and desirable. However, there were a few exceptions to this pattern; some children expressed their aversion to the reward system and stated that they did not enjoy being given awards or punishment for their work. These children questioned the practice of giving them no choice, other than to use this system. Such a system can be linked to behaviourist theories that seek to bring about a desirable outcome through rewards and punishment (Cox, 2011), and chapter 6 sought to interpret their use through the lens of Foucault's analysis of how punishment works and how psychology has been used to 'cure' people's madness (Foucault, 1988, Foucault, 2002). My study has shown that the use of systems of awards, rewards and punishment raised structural barriers to creativity, as it failed to take on board children's ideas for more progressive practices which would challenge the structure of learning processes that sought to control children's actions and behaviour. The implementation of these systems meant that children's thoughts, actions, behaviour, and work would be rewarded if, and only if, they met the teacher's criteria. Therefore, this discourse turned the focus away from enjoying learning, exploring ideas and experiencing creativity, to striving for externally motivated rewards.

8.2 Implications for policy and practice

Hence, having answered these questions and discussed the implications for the literature, I will now discuss implications of this research for policy and practice. As the literature review chapter of this thesis has argued, increasing attention is being paid to the 'quality' of educational institutions and of the outputs of learning (Avis, 2005, Moss, 2016). The concept of 'quality' has been criticised for presenting 'the world as "clean", without reflecting its messiness and complexity' (Dahlberg, 1999:2). This thesis confirmed findings from previous research which argued that teachers are pressured to meet the goals and demands of performativity (Ball, 2003) and are under pressure not only to be creative in their teaching, but also to meet externally imposed standards (Ferrari and Wyse, 2016, Hayward, 2015). The Scottish Government's announcement of the introduction of standardised testing in Scottish schools (The Scottish Government, 2015), may increase the stress experienced by teachers. In such high-pressure environments teachers may turn to technicist agendas that place strong emphasis on 'what works' (from adults'

perspectives) and, in doing so, diminish ‘ethical, social, political and educational considerations’ (Fielding, 2008:59). Teachers in my research often adopted rigid, unreflective and top-down approaches (see sections 5.3.3 and 6.3 of this thesis) which aimed to correct and regulate children’s work, instead of valuing diverse views and ideas. This study, therefore, problematises the excessive emphasis placed on ‘quality’ in schools and the performativity regimes that result. My thesis poses the question (for professionals and policy makers): what is the purpose of these standards if they result in meaningless learning? It would appear that the purpose is to satisfy adults’ needs rather than children’s aspirations. My research highlights a need for both policy and practice to take on board children’s ideas, feelings and interests (Wrigley and Wormwell, 2016). My findings allow me to conclude that policy and practice should enable teachers and children to create settings that promote a balanced approach between structure and freedom; that value/respect contributions from all stakeholders (especially children); and that enable the space needed for children’s creativity to flourish. However, this study has also highlighted that it is important for techniques such as balancing freedom and structure to be implemented within an anti-discriminatory environment. Creativity theories, policies and practices often promote neoliberal discourses (Munday, 2014) that may threaten to inhibit childhood; therefore, this study suggests that it is crucial that framings of creativity (both in policy and in practice) do not ignore the significance of building and maintaining anti-discriminatory environments in schools.

Drawing on the above, this study points to a need to reflect critically on ways in which the notion of agency is used in Scottish policy documents and is enacted in practice. Agency is at the forefront of recent developments in education in Scotland (Priestley and Biesta, 2013, Priestley et al., 2015), but has been used (both in theory and in practice) in ways that promote teachers’ individual agency (e.g. Priestley et al., 2015) but neglect children’s agency. The notion of individual agency has been problematised by researchers in the field of childhood studies (e.g. Gallacher et al., 2008, Tisdall, 2012) who argue that agency is not always a positive thing, that some children may not want to be active agents, and also that there is no such thing as an independent person, as we are all involved in a web of interdependencies (Prout, 2005). In my research, the way agency was used in the classroom did not leave enough space for children’s perspectives to be heard and valued. It under-utilised this important and more complex idea of agency (as not an individual thing) that contemporary childhood studies offer us. There is a need, thus, for policies to

pay attention to theorisations of agency as involving interdependent relationships between people or groups of people (Burkitt, 2016, Moosa-Mitha, 2005, Konstantoni, 2012), and for practice to involve both parties (children and teachers) in an organic, collaborative and dialogic process of co-creating learning practices (Davis and Smith, 2012). This will provide opportunities for children to exercise their agency, to participate to the degree they feel comfortable with, and to enhance their experiences of creativity. In addition to the above, this study has presented cases in which children exercised agency hierarchically. So, further questions that arise for practices that seek to foster childhood creativity are: Is it appropriate to employ punishment and reward systems in classrooms and is it appropriate for adults to punish children who harm other children? This thesis pointed towards a need to use dialogue, instead of punishment and reward.

This thesis also contributes to policy and practice literature by paying attention to the blurred landscape created by the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence and its impacts on the cultivation of creativity. In particular, this study has demonstrated that, within the single classroom of the study, the Curriculum for Excellence has multiple identities and lacks clear coherence as to what is expected of teachers. This lack of clarity means that schools are without a distinct plan, strategy and framework for enabling creativity.

In addition, definitions of creativity that were promoted in the policy documents (e.g. Education Scotland 2012b) were similar to the definition of creativity by the NACCCE (1999) report, which links creativity to originality and to the value and quality of the outputs: thus, promoting a notion of creativity as a commodity. However, the environment produced by the implementation of the CfE and the direction of creativity towards valuation of the quality of outputs, were not in line with scholarly arguments that highlight the importance of viewing creativity as a process (Craft et al., 2014, Davis, 2013). There is thus a need for policy and practice to be clear and coherent in terms of what their vision is for education and creativity. However, since the CfE has been interpreted differently by different people, a question also arises concerning how this complex issue can be solved. Would it be necessary to introduce another curriculum or can we move forward by engaging all the different stakeholders in dialogue, in line with Freire's (1993, 1994) theory of democratic education and dialogic pedagogy? This thesis, by concluding that it is possible to utilise such processes of dialogue, offers the hope that the problems of the

CfE are surmountable and that it can be adapted to become more child-focused and participatory. Yet, this will only happen if at the same time wider societal issues are given greater consideration in schools and we develop practices that are anti-discriminatory and more inclusive.

That is, this study contributes importantly to policy and practice literature by extending the work of Davis (2013), which demonstrated the value of diversity and collaborative creativity for adults and older young people. It does so by illustrating the importance children placed on diversity for fostering creativity in the classroom. Yet, it should be noted that children's views on the importance of acknowledging diversity and heterogeneity had little impact on the design of learning practices in schools. Therefore, my findings enable me to conclude that policy and practice on creativity in schools need to take more account of concepts such as intersectionality.

My research demonstrates the importance of children's intersectional identities for how they experience, perform and embody creativity. There is thus a need for policies to engage with questions such as: how do we avoid ethnicity washing, diversity tick-boxing and simply paying lip-service to vague notions of diversity as we go forward? And, how do we foster practices that are more enabling, that confront discrimination, that fully engage with contemporary ideas of inclusion and encourage children from diverse backgrounds (e.g. different age groups, different perceived 'ability levels', different races etc.) to work together?

By pointing towards a need to build spaces in which children feel accepted and included, this study, in particular, demonstrated the importance that children place on the experience of 'feeling included' as a building block of participation in collaborative creativity. Children linked inclusion to space – like studies which have argued that children view space as a process and not as a static entity (Christensen et al., 2015) and that space incorporates power relations and hierarchy (Davis et al., 2011). Within spaces, children experienced creativity as an embodied practice which was deeply embedded in their bodily interactions. As Prout (2000:2) argued, children's bodies 'are inseparable from, produced in, represented by and performed through their connections with other material objects'. This notion of embodied and embedded practice raises implications for professional practice; in particular, my findings enable the conclusion that it is important for teachers

to acknowledge that space, relationships and feelings are interconnected; that these interconnections influence children's experiences of creativity; and therefore, that the more inclusive the spaces are, the more favourable are the circumstances for enabling children to embody creativity.

8.3 Implications for future research

By employing an ethnographic approach and generating data through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, this study sought to utilise aspects of participatory research that highlight the need to uncover children's perspectives. However, although this study encouraged children to be involved in the data generation process, it did not involve children as researchers (see Kellett, 2004, Kellett, 2010). Therefore, future research could explore children's perspectives on and experiences of creativity through the creation of research practices that involve children in the design, analysis and dissemination processes of the research. This would be something unique in the field of creativity, since most research derives from the field of psychology that uses techniques of observation, classification and measurement (Alderson, 2013). Furthermore, since most research in the field of creativity focuses either in early childhood (e.g. Cremin et al., 2015, Craft, 2003a, Craft, 2002) or on older ages (young people/secondary education) (e.g. Chappell and Craft, 2011), the study of creativity that involves children at the upper level of primary school has been neglected. There is also a gap in research that uses innovative methodologies to explore children's perspectives on and experiences of creativity, which could be the subject of future research.

This study was framed by the ontological framework of postmodernism and poststructuralism. Despite criticisms which describe these frameworks as relativist or, frameworks 'in which anything goes' (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002:6), this study was driven by writing that believes such criticisms can be overcome; more specifically, which argues that by 'synthesising notions of agency, culture and structure' (Davis, 2000:199), one can pay attention to the 'whole' (Prout and James, 1997). This study never sought to provide a comprehensive picture of how the CfE promotes creativity for children across Scotland, yet it does provide insight into the interconnected issues that make up the 'whole' of what it is like to experience creative spaces in a single classroom.

This study has used ‘rigour’ in order to understand and present children’s own perspectives (Mason, 2002), and reflexivity to make the research process transparent to the reader. However, the findings of this research are not generalisable and cannot be used to claim that all children perceive, perform and embody creativity in the manner demonstrated in this study. Therefore, future research could employ cross-cultural comparison, mixed-methods or more positivist research approaches in order to produce generalisable findings or to ‘test’ the findings of this study across a wider population (e.g. Davis, 2013 indicates that surveys have been carried out with adults in the technical and creative industries across Europe).

Furthermore, as chapter 2 of this thesis explained, creativity has been studied through various disciplines. This thesis was placed in the field of childhood studies and the analysis of the findings mainly drew upon theories of the sociology of childhood. Further research could make interdisciplinary connections between the sociology of childhood and other disciplines, e.g. psychology. More specifically, further research could aim to understand children’s individual creativity and its development through interactions with others by using Vygotskian (2004, 1978a) and post-Vygotskian theories (Daniels, 2001) that place importance on how the interactions between people influence the individual. In addition, one might also want to pay more attention to how children’s creativity is shaped in practice through the process of improvisation, which calls for continuous movement and correction of creative processes, as framed by Ingold and Hallam (2007).

From a different viewpoint, psychology (and more specifically, developmental psychology) has been criticised as having being constructed within discourses of imperialism and racism; hence there are calls for researchers to adopt a critical stance towards dominant discourses of developmental psychology (Burman, 2008, 2012). Researchers prompt us to explore childhood and children’s lives not only in the global North, but also within the diverse contexts that exist in the global South (Twum-Danso Imoh, 2016). Moreover, the tendency to view children from the global North as the ‘prototypical children’ and those of the global South as deviants from these norms has been highly criticised (Burman, 2016). Punch (2003) highlighted that much child research in the global South continues to focus excessively on children in exceptionally difficult circumstances (e.g. child prostitutes, child soldiers, street children etc.). Therefore, future

research may want to pay attention to other aspects of children's lives in the global South, including their experiences of creativity in their communities or school environments.

Twum-Danso Imoh (2016) prompted researchers to produce more comparative studies between global South and North. She also demonstrated that there is a need for more useful dialogue between academics and practitioners based in both northern and southern contexts. Therefore, there is much space for research on childhood creativity to help us escape the dominance of westernised developmental psychology and to explore different perspectives on and experiences of childhood creativity in various contexts.

For example, Burman (1996) argued that childhood is perceived as incompatible with work, following a westernised image of what childhood should look like. And Connolly and Ennew (1996) argued that child work often has both positive and negative effects – might creativity be enabled or inhibited by such experiences?

As described in this research, children were placed in different classrooms based on categories of age. This categorisation followed theories that pay attention to age-based schemata and to the stages of children's development (Alderson, 2013). Such classifications have been used by psychologists who 'observe, test, classify and measure' children's development within the so-called universal stages of development (Alderson, 2013:26), and most schools accept these arguments in practice by dividing children into distinct groups, using 'age' as the dividing criterion. However, it has been argued that not all children follow a common age-based path (James, 2005). Future research could explore childhood creativity in contexts where children from different age groups are able to work together. It could also explore power dynamics between children from different age groups, as well as the way power operates and creates cultures of inclusion or exclusion among children in various settings, e.g. at home, in outdoor play spaces, etc.

Finally, as chapter 2 of this thesis has shown, creativity has been described by a plethora of definitions and there is a variety of approaches regarding how creativity can best be promoted in schools. Future research could explore childhood creativity from a broader and more theoretical angle, guided by the question: 'What is education for?' For example, product-based approaches to creativity are guided by a market-model of education that pays attention to performativity and 'quality'. By contrast, theorists from the field of

progressive pedagogy would promote different aspects of education including wonderment with nature and the need to develop supportive relationships that challenge convention. For example, Freire (1993, 1994) argued that education and learning should focus on enabling children to see the oppression that others seek to hide. Therefore, further research could shed light on what the purpose of education is (to produce good-quality objects, revolutionaries or both) and how creativity contributes to or resists the implementation of this purpose.

8.4 Concluding reflections

This thesis has explored how children and teachers perceived creativity within one primary school classroom in Scotland. Its key contribution is to show that:

- Creativity can be perceived differently by different people and the production of a single definition may restrict children's experiences of creativity.
- The performance of children's intersectional identities during peer-group interactions influences the way power operates, creating cultures of inclusion or exclusion and, as a result, affects children's experiences of creativity.
- Barriers to creativity may be raised by a synergy of cultural and structural factors, such as: parental expectations; pressures on teachers to document their work; the 'need' to raise standards; and the difficulties that teachers experience when attempting to find their voice within a blurred and unclear landscape created by multiple interpretations of the Curriculum for Excellence.

This thesis invites reflection on the purpose of education and on the role of creativity within the overall direction of education and society. Creativity shapes and is shaped by children's experiences in school, but as this thesis demonstrated, children's experiences are influenced by various cultural and structural factors. Thus, building enabling environments for creativity requires further collaboration between researchers, policy makers, educators, parents/caregivers, and children. Since creativity is perceived, performed and embodied in different ways, this thesis aimed to 'locate the social into the text' (Denzin, 1997:xii) by 'letting a variety of voices have equal authority' (Davis, 2000:197). By embedding reflexivity throughout the text, I attempted to give the reader

the opportunity to understand how my subjectivity was involved in the data that have been generated, how it influenced my interpretation of those data, and how it impacted on the final written text. Therefore, I aimed to provide space for readers to engage with the data of this research, and to reflect on and draw their own conclusions regarding the meaning(s) of creativity. I hope that this thesis will trigger discussions about the future of creativity, education and society, and about building environments that value diversity, challenge the status quo, and find collective solutions that can guide the way forward.

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Appendices

Information leaflet for parents/carers and teachers



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Can you help me?

Listening to children and promoting creativity in primary schools.

Who am I?

My name is Krystallia Kyritsi and I am a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. I am interested in how creativity can be best promoted in primary schools.

What would I like to do?

I would like to listen to children's and staff's perceptions on creativity.

What are the aims of the research?

- To hear children's views on creativity.
- To hear children's and staff's perceptions on applying creativity in a collaborative framework.
- To explore how those ideas can be applied in primary school classrooms in Scotland, within the Curriculum for Excellence.

How am I going to do it?

- I am going to observe the daily educational practice in one primary school classroom and participate in activities within the classroom or the playground.
- I will be talking to children and staff.

How can this research benefit children and staff?

- This research aims to support the development of participants' creativity.
- By listening to children's views, staff can develop their flexible teaching practice in ways that allow creativity to flourish.

Privacy and confidentiality

All information collected through the project will be treated confidentially. No names of children or staff will be used in any written publication, report or presentation about this study. All names and identifying characteristics will be changed so that no person or primary school that took part in the project can be recognised. Children and staff will have access to their own data.

Consent

This study has received the support of the school's Head Teacher and Edinburgh University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee.

You can say yes or no. Participation in the study is voluntary.

The child has the right to refuse to participate even if the parent/caregiver has agreed for his/her participation in the project.

If you change your mind, just let me know.

- If you want to stop your child from participating just let me know as soon as possible and your child will stop being included in the study.
- If you want to start later just let me know.

Why am I doing this project?

While I was working as a primary school teacher in Greece, I realised how much children enjoy creative and flexible learning environments. I am really passionate about bringing creativity in the daily educational practice and, so, I decided to do a PhD on that. This project will hopefully help me to complete my doctoral thesis and finish my PhD.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this leaflet!!!

I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form concerning your child's participation to this research and return it to school.

If you would like further information about
this research please do not hesitate to contact
me:

Krystallia Kyritsi
Thomson's Land 1.11
Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ

Telephone: 0131 6514879

Email: K.Kyritsi@sms.ed.ac.uk

Consent form for teachers

Practitioners' consent form

More information about the research can be found in the relevant leaflet. If a copy of the leaflet is required, please let me know.

Observations

I am interested in practitioners' approach towards promoting creativity in the primary school setting. I would like to observe practitioners' everyday practices and interactions between children and adults in the primary school classroom.

Interviews

I would like to conduct one interview with practitioners throughout the year, regarding views on creativity in primary school classrooms and the space that the Curriculum for Excellence provides to them for more flexible practices.

Each interview will last approximately 30-40 minutes.

Anonymity and confidentiality

No real names will be used so no one can be identified. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

Please complete and sign this form where appropriate:

I _____ (name of staff) **agree** to participate in this research.

Please tick if you agree to take part in some or all of the below:

Observation ☐ Interviews All ☐ ☐

I _____ (name of staff) **do not agree** to participate in this research.

Date: _____

Staff full name: _____

Signature:

Initial consent form for parents/carers

Parent's / Caregiver's Consent Form

Please, see the attached leaflet for details of this research.

This research is being carried out by Krystallia Kyritsi, a student at the Moray House School of Education - department of the University of Edinburgh -, for her PhD. This research may also be used in written publications, reports and presentations for educational or research purposes.

Anonymity and confidentiality

No real names of the children or the primary school will be used, as they will all be changed so no child can be identified. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

Please complete and sign this form where appropriate:

I _____ (name of parent / caregiver)

give

☐

do not give

☐

my permission for _____ (child's name) to take part in the research.

Please tick the box if you are happy for me to use any or all of the below during the research:

Photos

☐

Voice-recordings

☐☐

All

Please tick the box if you are happy for me to use the photos and voice recordings in any written publication or presentation about this research.

☐

Date: _____

Parent's / Caregiver's full name: _____

Signature: _____

Please, return this form to a member of the primary school staff as soon as possible.

Final consent form for parents/carers

Parent's / Caregiver's Consent Form

Please, see the attached leaflet for details of this research.

This research is being carried out by Krystallia Kyritsi, a student at the Moray House School of Education - department of the University of Edinburgh -, for her PhD. This research may also be used in written publications, reports and presentations for educational or research purposes. This will include photos and voice-recordings.

Anonymity and confidentiality

No real names of the children or the primary school will be used, as they will all be changed so no child can be identified. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

Please complete and sign this form where appropriate:

I _____ (name of parent / caregiver)

give

☐

do not give

☐

my permission for _____ (child's name) to take part in the research.

Parent / Caregiver signed: _____

Please, return this form to a member of the primary school staff as soon as possible.

Information leaflet and consent form for children



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Listening to you!

I am Krystallia and I am a researcher.

I would like to:



learn about creativity in primary schools



listen to you



write things in my book and talk to you

You could...

- Talk to me and ask me questions about my research.

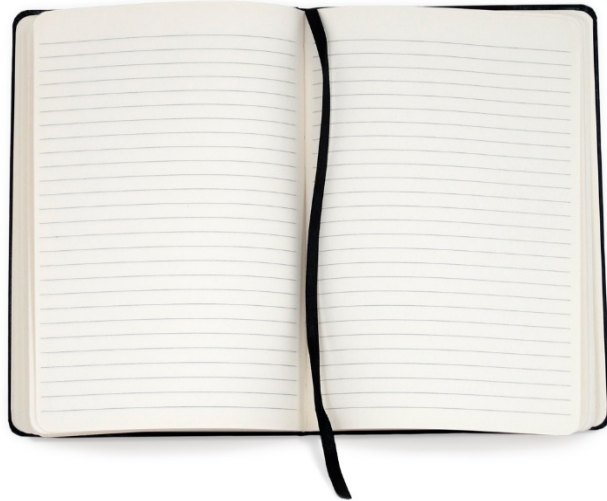


- See the notes that I keep about you.



- Participate in the interview process.





I will write a book about your thoughts, ideas and wishes. I will share these with you teachers, parents/carergivers and people from my school.

I will not tell anyone who you are.

Only if I get worried, or if you are not safe, I will have to tell the teacher about what you have told me.

If you...

- feel sad about what we are doing



- have questions



- want me to stop writing about you



Tell Krystallia or the teachers. Thank you.

Would you like to take part?

Yes



No

